

Spring 2011

## An Archaeological Examination of a Family Cemetery in the South Carolina Low Country

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF A FAMILY CEMETERY IN  
THE SOUTH CAROLINA LOW COUNTRY

by

BRIAN MILNER

(Under the Direction of Sue M. Moore)

ABSTRACT

Over the past eleven years excavations have been conducted at nineteenth century rice plantation near Coosawhatchie, South Carolina. This site has yielded an amazing assortment of artifacts as well as multiple structures associated with plantation life in the Antebellum South. It was during the course of this work that a long forgotten family cemetery was relocated. This paper details the process of excavation and locating of the cemetery, analysis of artifacts recovered, and the determination of the use of the area as that of a place of interment.

INDEX WORDS: CEMETERY, PLANTATION, COOSAWHATCHIE, ARCHAEOLOGY,  
SOUTH CAROLINA, LOW COUNTRY, MONT REPOSE, GILLISON.

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF A FAMILY CEMETERY IN  
THE SOUTH CAROLINA LOW COUNTRY

by

BRIAN MILNER

B.A. Georgia Southern University, 2006

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in

Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2011

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BRIAN MITCHELL MILNER

Major Professor: Sue M. Moore  
Committee: Sue M. Moore  
H. Stephen Hale  
Heidi M. Altman

Electronic Version Approved:  
May 2011

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking my committee members Dr. Sue Moore, Dr. Stephen Hale and Dr. Heidi Altman. Without their input and advice this thesis would not have been possible. They along with the other faculty of the Georgia Southern Anthropology Department have made learning and working in this field exciting and a pleasure to pursue. I would also like to thank my fellow graduate students who have been tremendous source of assistance, information and inspiration and for that I am grateful. I would also like to thank the field crews that participated in the excavations, without whom I would not have research base to work with. I would also like to thank my family for their support throughout my academic endeavors.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted in order to obtain a further understanding of the areas and structures associated with the 18<sup>th</sup> century rice plantation known as Mont Repose. It is known through archival records that a plantation called Mont Repose existed, however other information about structural dimensions, locations, numbers, uses, etc. have not survived through the archival records. This is why archaeological study is critical in understanding the past.

The current investigation was conducted with the primary goal of determining what structures if any remained in a small section of the site. The study also focused on determining the function of any structures found and how they related with plantation life. Over the course of three years of work at the site one structure was discovered. The purpose of this structure was determined to have been that of a family cemetery used by plantation owner Samuel R. Gillison and his immediate family.

While the primary goal was answered, several secondary objectives began to develop during the course of the study. These secondary objectives include: Who were the original owners/occupants of the area; what was their use for the area; was the structure found the only structure at that location or were there previous ones; could there have been other structures located nearby; why was there an abnormally large presence of aboriginal artifacts in the historic zone; and could the spatial patterning of family cemeteries be used to locate other structures associated with the plantation? These ideas open the possibility for future research at the site.

## CHAPTER 2

### AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF A FAMILY CEMETERY IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA LOW COUNTRY

The study of Archaeology from its earliest point has been a study of burial history. There are few places that can convey as much information about a person or peoples archaeologically as a place of burial. It has the ability to demonstrate a person's station and beliefs they held in life. Cemeteries can demonstrate observable, collective changes in society from a temporal perspective. While this area of study has the potential to shed so much knowledge on the ideals, beliefs and lives of past peoples and societies, there remain many areas that need to be further studied.

Archaeologists need a body of theory in order to relate the mortuary data at their disposal to pattern of human behavior within past societies. (Chapman, 1981) Thankfully such theory has been established. V. Gordon Childe states that

“Community of tradition imposes on all members of the society in question a common pattern of behavior. This must result in the production of standard types, which if they be artifacts, burial rites or remains of repasts, archaeology can identify.” (Childe, 1956)

The study of mortuary practices can show the link between the archaeological data present and the way in which a society deals with and understands death. It also establishes a method to present how these elements are shared commonly throughout a culture. While it has been established that collection of this data can benefit the understanding of past peoples, there have been shortcomings in the social analyses that has been published. According to Chapman there has been a severe lack of attention given to spatial patterning, understanding of symbolism, and regional analysis.

Archaeological studies of human burials have been ongoing since the very beginning of the field. Yet there is one important question to be asked, what makes a cemetery a cemetery? J. S. Curl defines a cemetery as being a “burial ground especially a large landscaped park or ground laid out expressly for the deposition or internment of the dead, not being a churchyard attached to a place of worship.” (Curl, 1999) While Curl’s definition is a useful starting point; it can be expanded to include more factors and different types of burial locations. According to Julie Rugg, Curl’s definition of a cemetery only differs from that of a churchyard because of its location and relation to a place of worship. Rug notes that

“Churchyards are often small tracts of burial land owned by and located close to the church and used over centuries, while cemeteries – often larger in scale and predominantly owned by secular authorities – have been in common use only since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.” (Rugg, 2000)

Rugg argues that along with these features of a cemetery are a site’s physical boundaries and layout, the sacredness of a site along with its relative permanence. R. Meyer also noted that another common condition of a cemetery was that it contained grave markers “that described characteristics of a deceased person’s life and dates of birth and death.” (Goreham, 1997)

Societal views of death have evolved and changed through the centuries. “It is acknowledged that, in practice, burial space is essentially mutable: its meaning does not remain static over time; and its significance is not uniform over all cultures.” (Curl, 1999) People have viewed death and the afterlife with apprehension, fear, complacency and hope. Changes over time can be observed in mortuary practices and graveyards. These views and traditions help to form certain universal traits that are consistent and observable. This common pattern “must result in the production of standard types, which if they be artifacts, burial rites or remains of repast, archaeology can identify.” (Chapman, 1981) Many different attributes of burials can be used in understanding the attitude of the living toward death. These include grave dimensions, locations,

and posture of the internment, grave orientation, iconography associated with grave markers, architecture, epitaphs, and literature from the period. Posture of remains in an internment can give insight into the religious views of that particular society. Often many pre-historic societies would inter their dead in a fetal position with legs and arms drawn into the chest. This represents the idea of rebirth in the afterlife. Grave orientation holds religious connotations. In Western Societies, burials are often placed facing east. This has connections with the Christian belief of the second coming of Christ and the Resurrection. Epitaphs provide great examples of the change in attitude of death over time. “Here is where poor Henry Lies, Nobody weeps and nobody cries. Where he went and how he fares, Nobody knows and nobody cares,” (Coffin, 1976) and “Here lies a man who died of late and was borne by angels to Heaven’s gate, then up stepped the Devil, as sly as a weasel, and down into Hell he pitched old Teasel,” (Coffin, 1976) are good examples of people trying to poke fun at death. The view of death as a dreadful specter can be expressed in the epitaph of James Hickox, “Great God, how oft thy wrath appears and cuts off our expected years they wraith awakes our humble dread we fear the Tyrant which strikes us dead.” (Ludwig, 1966)

One of the best examples of the observable change in the influence of death can be seen in the work of Deetz and Dethlefsen on “Death’s Heads Cherubs, and Willow Trees: Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries,” which document a trend of viewing death as a bleak and final thing that evolves over time with religious ideas of the afterlife as a peaceful reprieve from the trials and tribulations of this world. Gravestones prove exceptionally useful because they normally contain dates for the erection of the stone, genealogical data, age at death of the individual, epitaphs that sometimes deal with death, and the values associated with it by the individual and distinctive symbols that can document changes in the aspect of culture. Rathje



reports “the results of work on Tucson cemeteries which show correlations between the deceased’s job/income level and the form of grave markers.” (Rathje, 1979) Lewis O. Saum’s “Death In the Popular Mind of Pre-Civil War America,” gives the view that death was an ever present idea of Americans. It shows how Americans early on viewed death as a fearful and melancholy thing, while changing in the 1820’s to something desirable: a leave from all the troubles of this world to an eternal paradise. Stanley French’s work “The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the ‘Rural Cemetery’ Movement” included in Stannard’s *Death In America* is an excellent illustration of the changing view of death. French shows how the change from dreary churchyard cemeteries to sprawling park-like cemeteries, such as Mount Auburn, coincides with the change in attitudes of the afterlife.

French’s article details the movement from inner city burials that were nothing more than disease spreading rotting quagmires, to landscaped; tranquil gardens for the deceased. French notes that at the time of the shift to these “Rural Cemeteries” coincide with emerging ideas about death. No longer was death something to be feared or the dead simply forgotten. These new cemeteries gave people a place to reflect and remember those that passed on. It began the school of thought that death was something to be desired. French’s work notes how this concept was adopted by family cemeteries as well. Many farmers and middle class families that would have normally erected a family cemetery on family land now used communal “rural cemeteries.” These alleviated the fear that if for some reason the land no longer belonged to the family that the graves of loved ones would not be forgotten or obliterated by the new owners.

Religion plays a large part in the ideas and images associated with death. As religious views shift, there is also an observable pattern in grave iconography and funerary practices. According to Deetz and Dethlefsen, the death’s-head motif accompanied the harsh beliefs of

orthodox Puritanism. The Puritans viewed death with mixed emotions. Death was viewed as a blessed release from the trials of this world into the joys of everlasting life. At the same time, the Puritans regarded death as God's punishment for human sinfulness and on their deathbeds many were overcome with fear that they might suffer eternal damnation in Hell. Puritan youths were taught to fear death even from an early age. As adults the fear of death continued because puritan beliefs did not guarantee salvation of one's soul.

The death's-head's replacement by the cherub reflected eighteenth century religious liberalization during the "Great Awakening." During this period some scholars believe Orthodox Puritan views were being replaced by a more liberal perspective on religion. Attitudes toward death began to change. Where, in the 17th century, children were told to fear death, they were increasingly told in the 18th century to look forward to death as a reunion with God and their parents. Adults, in turn, were increasingly assured that a life of active piety assured salvation.

Finally, the shift to the urn-and-willow motif was thought to accompany the rise of less emotional and more secular religions such as Unitarianism and Methodism. The wording on gravestones also changed in the period following the "Great Awakening." It began reflecting a dramatic transformation in American views of death during the time. Instead of inscriptions that read, "Here lies buried the body of;" inscriptions began to read, "Here rests the soul of." This subtle change in wording can suggest that while the corporal body might decay the soul survived. Death was increasingly regarded by many as merely a temporary separation from loved ones. During the end of this religious fervor death iconography changed once again. As Zelinsky notes, tombstones show the trends of religiosity inherent in a society. (Zelinsky, 2007) It helps to show the ebb and flow as religion's importance in a society changes. As a society's religious participation increases, so too does the appearance of sacred grave markers and as it's religious

participation decreases so does the use of sacred grave markers. This relation of grave markers and religious participation is observed through many nations, regions and periods.

Cemetery studies have given us the opportunity to observe and understand the changes that occur in societies as time passes. Cemeteries are repositories for the dead with sacredness about them. They have been separated from the churchyards of old. We can interpret this information from the archaeological clues left behind. Grave markers, spatial patterning, orientation, goods and location all offer some insight into the past. The meaning of a cemetery itself is ever changing and subject to the views and beliefs of the time. Cemetery iconography shows the transition from a view of death as something to be feared and lamented into a view of a temporary inconvenience.

While much research has been conducted on large scale cemeteries, like Mount Auburn in Massachusetts and smaller scale community graveyards, very little attention has been given to the family cemeteries in the United States. This is especially true in the South Carolina Low Country. American plantation archaeology truly began in the 1960's with the work of Charles H. Fairbanks testing of slave occupied sites. (Singleton, 1985) In the following decades the field of "Plantation Archaeology" expanded the knowledge of life in the Antebellum South. However, attention was almost always devoted to the areas occupied by the living. Those areas reserved for the dead were virtually overlooked. Family cemeteries were a common occurrence on almost all homestead sites located outside of the town. According to Bachman and Catts,

"The possession of the family cemetery was desirable within the context of an agriculturally based economy with a world view derived from continuity upon an allegiance to the land, the nurturing of a family-owned farmstead, and an individual self-worth derived from land ownership and farm productivity."  
(Bachman and Catts, 1990)

These family burial areas were usually located near and to the rear of the main house. With the house located between the road and the graves it provided a “means of keeping the family dead out of the public way and in a personal, more controllable space...” (Bachman and Catts, 1990) The topography of the area in which the family cemetery is located is an important determinant. Often a family cemetery will be located within 400 to 1000 ft. toward the rear of the main house structure. (Bachman and Catts, 1990) Many of these cemeteries would be “set off by a masonry wall, iron fence, vegetation, or a boundary ditch.” (Bachman and Catts, 1990) It is for this reason we can assume that if a burial plot is located, it can suggest the location of other structures located within the site.

These historic burial places in the South share commonality with their Northern counterparts. One reason for this is that “colonial settlers along the coasts of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia – areas that have virtually no rock – looked to New England and even England for the slate and marble markers that would honor their dead.” (Yalom, 2008) Even when stone was available, carvers still followed the trends of their Northern contemporaries. Epitaphs in the south were “similar to epitaphs found elsewhere in early America...” (Yalom, 2008) In the South; however, one main difference did set cemeteries apart from those found in the North; blacks and whites were normally interred in separate cemeteries. This separation is noted by Yalom when she states, “What you won’t see in antebellum white cemeteries are any black people’s graves.” (Yalom, 2008) Slave burials usually occurred in the woods or in far fields and were marked by rocks, seashells, or simple wooden markers. (Yalom, 2008) This separation of races in Southern cemeteries would suggest that if there are two cemeteries located on a site and one is known to be the slave cemetery, then the other is likely the burials of the white plantation owners.

## CHAPTER 3

### A HISTORY OF A SOUTH CAROLINIAN TOWN

In the South Carolina Low Country resides the small town of Coosawhatchie. It was named for the river that runs through the edge of town and feeds into the Broad River. The river is navigable slightly past the town and in days past would have served as a thoroughfare for the bustling rice and cotton plantations of the region. Today Coosawhatchie is a shadow of its former self. Only two churches and a few residences still populate this once vibrant town.

Coosawhatchie began as a stop on the coach road that ran from Charleston to Savannah in the mid 1700's and quickly grew to become the county seat for the Beaufort District. In the area, several rice plantations sprang up along the Coosawhatchie and Tulaifiney rivers. The agricultural fields were flooded using a series of canals and dikes cut from these rivers, many of which can still be located on aerial photos to this day. The area was low lying and perfectly suited to rice cultivation. This was also its downfall. By the 1840's, the town had been deemed an extremely unhealthy area and the county seat was moved to the nearby town of Gillisonville. After the county seat moved much of the local business moved too; leading to the rapid decline of the once important town.

Coosawhatchie resides today in Jasper County. Over time it has passed jurisdiction from Jasper, Hampton, Beaufort and others. This combined with the retention of the British Parish system that was in place when it was established has made tracking down information about the area very difficult. Our focus in the area begins at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. From 1748 to 1868 the town fell into St. Luke's Parish in the Beaufort District. The Coosawhatchie River was the dividing line between Parishes with Prince William Parish to the north of the river and St. Luke's Parish to the south. It was in this Parish and located

only a few miles from town, that the plantation known as Mont Repose was established. Documentary evidence for the precise establishment and first owner of the plantation has not been found. This is due in part to a fire in 1865 that destroyed the county courthouse and all records stored therein. At this time the best estimation is that the property was owned by the progenitor of our focus family, Mr. Derry Gillison by the 1790's. It is still uncertain if Derry established Mont Repose or if there was already an earlier residency there.

### Mont Repose: A Time Line

Mont Repose was a rice plantation established in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It is located in Coosawhatchie, South Carolina. No standing structure exists from the plantation today. The land on which it resided is privately owned and used as a hunting club. With permission from the landowner, initial work began at the site in 2000. In that year a grid was established for the site along with extensive shovel testing. (See Figure 45) Using the shovel test results as a guide units were placed in areas that promised to hold artifacts and structures associated with the former plantation. In 2003 a few additional units were opened. In 2004 field work resumed at the site. The block area with units began to reveal evidence of a domestic structure in the form of artifacts and soil features. In 2006 the work continued in the uncovered structure, which was hypothesized to be a detached kitchen structure. In 2007 work continued on the detached kitchen and was expanded to include ground penetration radar of an area located near the present day house to determine if any of the original plantation home remained. Units were also placed on the bluff to the north and west of the "Kitchen Block". Before the 2008 field season overlays containing the results of the shovel tests conducted in 2000 were reviewed. It was decided that bluff area to the west of the "Kitchen Block" may contain additional structures associated with the plantation and warranted testing. A total of 13 units were excavated. During the excavation a

mortar line from a masonry wall was discovered, along with unusual soil features that indicated the possible presence of graves. Using an exploratory trench and auger tests the dimensions of the wall were discerned. In 2009, the decision was made to use a mini excavator to remove the plow zone off of an area located between the boundaries of the mortar line. Once the overburden was removed the area was troweled off and revealed the presence of at least 13 grave shafts. Work has continued at the “Kitchen Block” and has been expanded to other areas of the property during 2010 and will continue to be examined in the 2011 field season.

### Derry Gillison

Derry Pittman Gillison was born on June 10, 1743 in Barwick, Maine. (Austin, 2008) It was there that he met and married Elizabeth Bethson on January 8, 1770. (Austin, 2008) On December 21, Derry’s first daughter Mary was born living only a week. (Austin, 2008)

The earliest record of Derry being in the Beaufort area of South Carolina is from 1771. In that year he was a witness to a will for a John Sealy in Grahmville. (Charleston Deed Book T-3, 1976) On February 27, 1772 Derry’s first son Thomas Charles was born. (Austin, 2008) In 1775 their second son, Mosely was born on January 19. (Austin, 2008) After 1771, Derry does not show up in the official records for approximately six years. It is unclear exactly what he was doing during this time. According to one source, Derry “came from New England state and established a tannery and shoe factory there, an innovation of the Lowcountry.” (Perry, 1962) It could be speculated that during this six year period he was establishing his tannery. This tannery would have proved to be a profitable endeavor and may have been the catalyst for Derry’s wealth. According to a memoir written by the grandson of Abraham Huguenin, “Derry Gillison came to Coosawhatchee (South Carolina) from Massachusetts, with a number of Negro shoe makers, and established a tannery, and converted the leather into shoes, which he sold to the

planters. He amasses a large fortune, which he invests in Negroes and land..." (Josiah D. Beck, 1998)

On August 21, 1777, Derry was mentioned in a deed abstract where a Mr. Hezekiah Rose of St. Helena Parish (in Beaufort County) issued a Lease & Release to Hannah Catterton for "£25 SC Money, 500 acres in Granville County on waters of Coosawhatchie, on Beaver Dam branch adj. land of Adrian Mayer Esqr., land suppose to be Derry Gillisons..." (Holcomb, 1993) This deed is the earliest known record of Derry having land holdings in the area. In that same year, the third Gillison son was born. Born January 11, he lived only four months, dying on April 1<sup>st</sup> of that year. (Austin, 2008) During the American Revolution, Derry briefly joined the side of the colonists. "He served twenty-seven days as an express rider between Charleston and Savannah during October 1779." (Moss, 1983) On April 28 of that year Elizabeth Gillison was born. (Austin, 2008) In September of 1780, Derry's son Mosley died. (Austin, 2008) December 30, 1782 Derry and Elizabeth's forth son David William was born. (Austin, 2008) On July 14, 1784 Elizabeth gave birth to twin girls Anna and Sarah Gillison. Sarah unfortunately lived only two months and died on September 14. (Austin, 2008) Derry and Elizabeth had two other daughters Susannah and Mary Drayton who did not survive infancy. (Austin, 2008)

A decade after his service to the patriots Derry ordered a plat from John Fenwick to survey three hundred acres of the waters of the New River in the Beaufort District. (South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 2000) By the Census of 1790, Derry was well established in the Beaufort District. It showed that he was living in the district with his wife Elizabeth, two sons over the age of 16 years, one son under 16 years, two daughters, and owning 39 slaves. (1790 United States Federal Census) In 1790, Derry's son Samuel R. Gillison was born. (Austin, 2008) On December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1794 Thomas Charles was married. (Austin, 2008)



Derry's daughter Elizabeth married on February 2, 1798 and died in December of the same year. (Austin, 2008) In 1800 Derry showed up in the Census data for St. Luke's Parish. In that year he was listed as living with one son under ten, one son between sixteen and twenty-five, and one son twenty-six to forty-four. Females in the residence included one daughter between sixteen and twenty-five and one as forty-five and over. (1800 United States Federal Census) On April 9, 1801 Derry's daughter Anna Maria married Abraham Huguinan. (A. S. Salley, 1902) David Gillison married on August 4, 1806. (Austin, 2008) Derry once again appeared in the 1810 Census. He was still listed as living in St. Luke's Parish and had only one son between sixteen and twenty-five living with him and Elizabeth. (1810 United States Federal Census) In May of 1815, Derry's second son David died. (Austin, 2008) Derry died on May 11, 1816 at the ripe old age of 73. His wife Elizabeth died three years later in 1819 (See Figure 47).

### Thomas Charles Gillison

Thomas Charles Gillison is the next person of interest to Mont Repose. Thomas was born on the 27 of February, 1772. (Austin, 2008) Thomas was married on December 4, 1794 to his first wife Jane at the age of twenty-two. (Austin, 2008)

He first appeared in the official records on the Census of 1800. In that year he was listed as residing in Prince Williams Parish, which lies to the north of the Coosawhatchie River. According to the record, living with Thomas was one female under ten years, two females between the ages of twenty-six and forty-four, and one over the age of forty-five. He was listed as having no slaves during that year. (1800 United States Federal Census) On April 4, 1800 a bill of sale appeared for Thomas for the purchase of a slave named Joe, who was a carpenter, from George Smith. (South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 2000)

In 1808 Thomas brought a court case against William Heyward over the use of a road. Thomas was listed in the case as living on a plantation called Retreat near two other plantations referred to as Recess and Fickle Hill which were owned by Heyward. In that case Thomas said that Heyward forbid him use of the road, which was the only access from Retreat Plantation to Coosawhatchie. He claimed that the road had always been there and had been intended for public use even though the road ran through Heyward's main planting fields. Prior to Thomas, Retreat Plantation had been owned by a Gen. McPherson. According to the brief, Thomas sighted the "Book of the Com'rs of the roads," which stated that an "order entered into this that a road shall be laid out for Genl. McP. from the Retreat to Fickle Hill, and by the road from thence & continued to Pocotaligo. (Holcomb, 2001) This established that it was indeed a public roadway. During Gen. McPherson's occupation of Retreat, McPherson left for Europe in 1803. During that time Heyward put gates up along the road and locked them, denying access. Upon his return McPherson "re-claimed the road, Said he had never conveyed it away. The lock was aft'd taken from the gate and the way left open. Gates were always kept up on the road before, but never locked." (Holcomb, 2001) Thomas had several other witnesses speak on his behalf. They stated that they have always known of the road and it has always been intended to be used as public access from the plantations to the public landing in Coosawhatchie. (Holcomb, 2001) Unfortunately, the outcome of the case was not listed.

Thomas appeared two years later in the Census of 1810. There he was listed as still living in Prince William's Parish, and as having one daughter under the age of ten, one between ten and fifteen and his wife Jane being between twenty-six and forty-four and having ninety-four slaves. (1810 United States Federal Census) In 1819, Thomas ordered a plat for 139 acres on the Coosawhatchie River. The record unfortunately doesn't state if it's on the Prince Williams or St.

Luke's Parish side of the river. (South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 2000) In 1820 Thomas was listed as having one male forty-five and older and one female twenty-six to forty –five living at his residence. (1820 United States Federal Census) In 1824 Thomas had two tax returns. One of the returns was listed for Prince Williams Parish, while the other was listed for St. Luke's Parish. In St. Luke's Parish, Thomas was listed as having 1000 acres, town property and 48 slaves. (South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 1825) For Prince Williams Parish, Thomas had 2273 acres and 157 slaves. (South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 1825)

Thomas died on June 4, 1825 in Philadelphia at the age of 51. A memoir of Thomas was written in 1825. It detailed how Thomas had spent his later summers in Philadelphia and had been in ill health for some time. It states that, "to him, death was a happy escape from the pains of an earthly imprisonment, to the liberty of a region where sorrow and sighing flee away." (The American Baptist Magazine, 1825) A will was issued by Thomas on his death. In it he left his second wife Hetty Gillison property in Pennsylvania, his nephew Thomas Gillison, son of Samuel R. Gillison, a plantation called "Cotton Hall" near Coosawhatchie, his brother Samuel property "formerly belonging to the estate Lambright" and property in Coosawhatchie to the children of his deceased brother Charles Gillison. (Wills: Abstracts, Book 8 – Part C: 1825, 1825)

### Samuel R. Gillison

Samuel R. Gillison Sr. was the youngest son of Derry and Elizabeth. He was born sometime around 1790. Samuel did not show up in the written record until 1812. In that year, he was married to his wife Elizabeth Ann Smith in Scriven County, Georgia. (Jervey, 1936) During

that same year, Samuel joined in the War of 1812. He enlisted with the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the South Carolina Militia, also known as the “Youngbloods”, as an ensign. (War of 1812 Records)

In the 1820 Census, Samuel was listed in St. Luke’s Parish. He had two males under the age of ten, one sixteen to twenty-five, and two twenty-six to forty-five. Females in the residence include one under ten, one sixteen to twenty-five and one twenty-six to forty-five. (1820 United States Federal Census) In 1823, Samuel appeared in a petition by Francis Porcher. The petition was seeking compensation for a slave that died as the result of a competition that took place while they were working on a public road. (South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 2000) In March of 1826, Samuel bought a slave named Billy around 24 years of age from Mathew Keith. (South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 2000) Samuel then sold Billy to a Mrs. Susan Jane Stephens the same day. (South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 2000) In 1830 Samuel showed up as owning property in Prince William and St. Luke’s Parish. In 1824 Samuel took possession of the land left to him by his brother Thomas, “formerly belonging to the estate Lambright.” (Wills: Abstracts, Book 8 – Part C: 1825, 1825) In Prince William Parish Samuel was listed as having 126 slaves, but maintaining no permanent home. His son, Thomas, was also listed in this parish with 69 slaves and also having no permanent home. (1830 United States Federal Census) This land in Prince William Parish was the land granted to Samuel and Thomas by Samuel’s brother Thomas Charles in his will in 1824. Samuel was, however, listed as having a permanent home in St. Luke’s Parish. In the census his household was listed as having one male less than five years of age, two males age fifteen to twenty and one age thirty to forty. Females for the home were listed as two under the age of five, one between five and ten, one age ten to fifteen and one age thirty to forty. Samuel also had sixty-five slaves in this parish. (1830 United States Federal Census) This property in St. Luke’s Parish was Mont

Repose Plantation. Ten years later, in 1840, Samuel and his son Thomas were listed as heads of households in St. Luke's Parish. Thomas was listed as having one male under the age of five and two between twenty and thirty. Females were listed as one between the age of twenty and thirty with one hundred and three slaves. Meanwhile, his father Samuel was listed as having one male age fifteen to twenty, one twenty to thirty and one fifty to sixty, with females listed as one ten to fifteen, one fifteen to twenty and one age fifty to sixty. Also listed were 223 slaves. (1840 United States Federal Census) This information raises a few questions. Since Samuel and his son Thomas are only listed in St. Luke's Parish, this would suggest that either all of their holdings were included only under St. Luke's or they had sold off their property in Prince William and were focusing solely on their holdings in St. Luke's. Another possibility could be that there was a shift in crops during the time of year in which the census was taken that could have warranted a shift in workers across the river. In March of 1845 Samuel's daughter married Isadore Lartigue. In an article from *The South-Carolinian* it states that "Married at Montrepos, St. Luke's Parish, on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst., by the Rev. Mr. Reid, Col. Isadore Lartigue of St. Peter's, to Miss Adela G., eldest daughter of Samuel R. Gillison Esq." (Columbia Newspapers: The South-Carolinian, 1845)

Samuel died on November 3, 1847. Fortunately Samuel left a will. In his will, Samuel left his wife Ann Elizabeth "twenty five negroes in families to be selected by her out of all the negroes I leave... Also my Mount Repose Plantation with the adjacent tracts called Lambright and Wallace the former devised to me by my brother Thomas Gillison... and from and immediately after the death of my said wife I give and devise the Mont Repos plantation with adjacent tracts called Lambright and Wallace... to my daughter Sarah Rebecca..." (Samuel R. Gillison Estate Records, 1846-1865) Along with the division of his property Samuel also laid out

how he was to be buried. “It is my will and I hereby authorize my executors to erect a suitable wall around my family burial ground at Mont Repos and such tombstones and monuments as they may deem proper.” (Samuel R. Gillison Estate Records, 1846 – 1865) Samuel clearly stated that there was to be a family cemetery at Mont Repose and that it was to be enclosed by a wall.

### Sarah Rebecca Gillison

Sarah Rebecca Gillison was the youngest daughter of Sameul Gillison. She inherited Mont Repose Plantation after her father’s death. Sarah married James Joseph Butler on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1849. James and Sarah had two daughters. Eliza Gillison Buttler was their oldest and Louisa Ford Butler their youngest. It was Eliza that played an important role in helping to verify the cemetery found was the Gillison Family Cemetery. James was listed as having “Died of consumption at the residence of Mrs. H.G. O’Bannon, near Barnwell Village, on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1854, J.J. Butler aged 27 years, 11 months and 22 days. He left a wife and two children.” (McClendon, 1977) James was buried near Barnwell, South Carolina. His wife Sarah was not buried with him. Eliza Gillison Butler died sometime between 1854 and 1860. We know this because of the death notice of her father in 1854 which states he left two children and the 1860 Census which lists Sarah R. Butler and Louisa F. but not Eliza. Eliza was buried at Mont Repose in the family cemetery. A foot stone found in the area of the cemetery against a tree was marked with the initials E. G. B. There is also a reference in the *Annals of Georgia Important Early Records of the State: Volume III Mortuary Records* that states, “there was a grave with a headstone marker that read “Butler, Eliza Gillison. Our Daughter.” The account also states there was “A lone grave on a bluff one mile from Coosawhatchie, overlooking the railroad tracks.” Sarah died in 1863 at her mother’s home in Grahmville, South Carolina. We believe that Sarah was buried in the family cemetery with her daughter and father.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

The site known as Mont Repose or 38JA407 was laid out using a modified Mercator grid system over the site to easily reference and map. A permanent datum was fixed on a numbered power pole near the end of the driveway leading to the site. All units located on the site were referred to by North and East coordinate of the Southwest corner of the unit. Within each unit, excavations were broken into levels and zone. Levels referred to noticeable and full color changes in the soil over the entire unit. Zones referred to ten centimeter increments in depth. Screens used for sifting were fitted with 1/4in mesh screens for some units and 1/16in for others. All measurements were metric.

Work began on the bluff area of Mont Repose on Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2007. The area had originally looked promising from shovel tests done of the area in 2000 (See Figure 45). Those shovel tests yielded distinct patterns of brick and nails that were plotted on an overlay. When plotted these patterns were in the form of two distinct rectangles with positive tests for brick in between the two. On the western end of the site lay the bluff and one of the rectangular patterns displayed by the analysis of the shovel tests. After looking over all the information, it was concluded that this area warranted a closer examination because of the likelihood that the area contained more structures from occupation during the plantation's period. These structures were theorized to be either outlying support structures or possibly slave dwellings.

### 2007 Field Season

On March 28 2007, a test unit was established a few meters east of the bluff. The area is located at a man-made, sloping pathway that leads down the bluff to the rice canal below. This is

one of two such features existing on the bluff ridge. The other is located north of the area believed to be the main house site. The test unit was a one meter by two meter unit running east to west. This unit was established at N853 E692 (See Figure 42). All measurements taken on this unit were taken from the transit station set over point N838 E710. The beginning measurement for the unit was 1.82m below transit. The opening measurements for the unit are as follows: Southwest corner (N853 E692) was 1.82m, Northwest corner (N854 E692) was 1.90m, Northeast corner (N854 E694) was 2.08, and the Southeast corner (N853 E694) was 1.88m. This shows that the slope from the Southeast corner to the Northeast corner was 20cms, while the slope from the Southwest to the Northwest was only 8cm. The slope running from Northwest to Northeast was 18cm and the Southwest to the Southeast was 6cm. Excavations started by stripping off the grass root layer of the unit. This was done using square shovels and it was then screened through 1/4in wire-mesh screen. The root layer lasted for approximately 10cm. Once the root layer was removed it was recorded as Level 1, and all artifacts recovered were given a Field Specimen Number of 1000. After the root layer had been removed, Level 2, Zone A was begun. This zone was still in the plow layer for the site. After 10cm, there were no visible color changes present in the unit. Zone A was closed and artifacts recovered were assigned the Field Specimen Number 1001. Since there was no visible color change the Level 2 was retained while the Zone was changed to B. Zone B also persisted for 10cm with no visible change in color. Once 10cm was reached, the artifacts were assigned a Field Specimen Number of 1002. Excavations then proceeded with Level 2, Zone C. During Zone C the Eastern portion of the unit experienced a color change from a dark organic layer to a tan loamy soil. This new soil in eastern portion yielded Aboriginal pottery and chert flakes. It was determined that the tan soil change was experienced in the Eastern portion first because of the slope that was present. The Western



portion of the unit was then leveled until it produced the same color change. It was given the notation of Level 2, Zone D. Artifacts recovered from this section were given a Field Specimen Number of 1003. Since a color change had been reached, the Level was changed to 3 and a new Zone of A was begun. This zone yielded aboriginal artifacts. At this new level, excavations were ceased in this unit because of the end of the field season. The unit was backfilled and artifacts recovered from Level 3, Zone A were given the Field Specimen Number of 1004.

### 2008 Field Season

The field crew returned to the site on May 20, 2008. During the time away from the site, it was decided to study the shovel test results for the site more closely. The results from the shovel tests were placed on transparencies so that they could be overlain and show areas with concentrations of brick, mortar, ceramics, etc. Just a few meters to the west of Unit N853 E692 is a flat bluff area that overlooks a drop-off into the canal. While looking at the overlays it was determined that this area displayed a rectangular pattern of brick and nail fragments recovered from the initial shovel tests. This pattern is similar to other patterns on the site where structures have been located. In several instances it was noted that mortar was recovered from the shovel tests that lasted for more than 15 centimeters. From this information it was decided to place multiple one meter by two meter units to see if the area contained structures. By the end of the field season, a total of twelve one by two meter units had been placed along with a single one meter by one meter unit (See Figure 42 & 43).

Unit N859 E675 was placed because of shovel test results that indicated extremely high concentrations of mortar. The unit ran in a north to south orientation. Opening measurements for the unit were around 1.23m below transit with a slight dip in the southeastern corner. Level one again consisted of the root-layer which lasted for approximately 10cm. Artifacts retrieved from

this level were given a Field Specimen Number of 1005. Level 2, Zone A was opened and lasted for 10cm. At this point three features were observed. Each was excavated separately and each given their own unique Field Specimen Number of 1010, 1011, and 1012 respectively.

Unit N857 E684 was started southeast from the previous year's unit. Opening measurements were 1.78m below transit with a 1.89m below transit in the southeastern corner. The root-layer in this unit persisted for 10cm below surface level and artifacts found were assigned Field Specimen Number 1006. Level 2, Zone A was then begun and lasted for 10cm. Field Specimen Number 1007 was assigned to this Level and Zone. No visible color change was noted in after this 10cms and Level 2, Zone B was begun. After another 10cm Zone B was closed, and Field Specimen Number 1014 was assigned. Level 2, Zone C was the final level for this unit. It persisted for another 10cm before it reached a definite color change for sterile soil. Artifacts collected were noted as Field Specimen Number 1018 and the unit was closed.

Unit N862 E666 was opened in an open portion of the bluff that had a visible depression along with one fully intact hand-made brick laying on the surface. Opening measurements for this unit were 1.39m in the southwestern corner, 1.41m in the northwestern, 1.29m in the northeastern and 1.35m in the southeastern. Level one lasted for 10cms and artifacts were listed as Field Specimen 1009. Level 2, Zone A persisted for 12cms, after which a feature of mottled clay and soil was observed. Artifacts from Level 2, Zone A were recorded with Field Specimen Number 1015. Excavations in this unit were halted to open a unit to the south to try and expose more of the mottled clay and soil which appeared to extend southward.

Unit N855 E664 was placed in a north to south orientation between a large black walnut and large live oak tree. Opening measurements for this unit were approximately 1.24m below transit. Level 1 extended 10cms below surface and artifacts from this level were noted as Field

Specimen 1008. Level 2, Zone A was begun and it closed after 10cms. Located in Level 2, Zone A was another mottled clay feature running from the northwest corner south 0.5m into the eastern wall. From the Northeastern corner the feature ran 0.6m south. This feature was numbered as Feature 38. Artifacts recovered were recorded with Field Specimen Number 1017.

Unit N859 E674 was opened west of Unit N859 E675. Opening measurements were 1.62 meters in the northern half of the unit, while the southern half was approximately 8cms lower at 1.64m. Level 1 was closed after 10cm. Artifacts recovered were noted as Field Specimen 1016. Level 2, Zone A lasted 10cms.

Test Unit A was opened on the down slope portion of the bluff. It was opened off grid, and was an attempt to discern what kind of materials and how much had been previously pushed from the bluff area over the cliff by previous land owners. It was placed just north of the transit station. Opening measurements for Test Unit A were 2.11m in the southwest corner, 2.21m in the northwest, 2.05m in the northeast, 1.99m in the southeast, and 2.10m in the center. Level one closed with the northern portion about 10cms lower than the southern. This was due to the slope of the bluff. Level 2, Zone A was opened and closed after 10cms. Level 2, Zone B and Zone C also lasted for 10cms. After Level 2, Zone C a notable color change was observed. Level 3, Zone A was opened at this changed and persisted for another 10cms. Level 3, Zone B was started and was closed after 10cms at sterile soil.

Unit N857 E664 was opened north of Unit N855 E664. This unit was also running in a north/south orientation. This unit was opened to determine if the feature present in Unit N855 E664 continued. Level one was opened and lasted for 10cms. Level 2, Zone A lasted 10cms and was assigned Field Specimen Number 1028. Level 3, Zone A was opened and lasted for 10cms

and was noted as Field Specimen 1036. The feature present in unit N855 E664 extended into N857 E664. It extended north from N857 E664 0.69m and north from N857 E665 0.30m.

Unit N861 E675 was opened west of Unit N859 E675. Opening measurements were 1.23m below datum. Level 1 closed after 10cms. Level 2, Zone A was opened and lasted for 10cms.

A unit was opened N838 E688. Opening measurements were 1.38m. Level 1 lasted for 14cms. All artifacts were assigned Field Specimen Number 1020. Level 2, Zone A persisted for 11cms. Artifacts recovered were noted as Field Specimen 1023. Level 2, Zone B lasted for 10cms. Level 2, Zone B was assigned Field Specimen Number 1026. Level 3, Zone A was opened and assigned Field Specimen Number 1040.

Unit N859 E673 opened with measurements in the southwest 1.01m, northwest 1.02m, northeast 1.16m, southeast 1.16m and center 1.11m. Level 1 persisted for 20cms. Level 2, Zone A lasted for 10cms. Level 2, Zone B lasted for 10cms. The unit was closed after Level 2, Zone B

Unit N861 E666 was opened south of Unit N862 E666. Opening measurements for were 1.26m in the southwest, 1.31m in the northwest, 1.29 in the northeast, 1.26 in the southeast, and 1.25m in the center. Level one closed after 10cms. Level 2, Zone A was opened and closed after 10cms.

Unit N861 E674 was opened north of N859 E674. Opening measurements were approximately 1.23m below transit. Level 1 lasted for 13cms. Level 2, Zone A was opened and lasted for 10cms. The unit was closed after this level.

Unit N861 E673 was opened north of N859 E673. Opening measurements for the unit were approximately 1.27m below transit. Level 1 was closed after 10cms. Level 2, Zone A and B both lasted for 10cms. The unit was closed after Level 2, Zone B.

Unit N859 E676 was opened east of N859 E675 in an attempt to see what was present on the other side of a possible wall feature. Opening measurements for this unit were approximately 1.20m below transit. Level 1 persisted for 10cms and the unit was closed afterwards.

During the culmination of the 2008 field season, a small exploratory trench was extended south off of unit N859 E674 in order to follow the mortar line of the wall exposed earlier in the season (See Figure 7). The trench itself was extended about 3 meters and exposed brick in situ with the mortar line, as well as a wooden post still imbedded in the mortar line (See Figure 8). Following this it was decided to use an auger to sample points along the wall to find its termination. Following the wall south, it extended for about 10 meters from the units and turned west and persisted for about 3 or 4 meters before no more mortar was extracted from the auger samples. Heading north along the mortar line, the wall extended for approximately 6 meters and also turned west. On the north western expanse of the wall the auger tests produced more mortar for approximately 15 meters and turned south. All tests holes made with the auger were mapped into a site map on the last day of the season access was allowed to the site (See Figure 44). Once at all the data gathered was analyzed and the determination was made that the area could possibly be the family cemetery. It was decided that the following year the field crew would try to expose a larger portion of the area to see if we could definitively confirm that this was area was indeed a cemetery.

## 2009 Field Season

In early May 2009, the field crew returned to the site. We employed the use of a mini excavator, fitted with a flat scrape blade bucket to remove the plow zone off of a large area near the original test units (See Figure 10). The area chosen was determined using the previous year's discovery of a mortar wall. The work using the excavator was done prior to the field season start

and the field crew's arrival. Once the field season began and the crew arrived, the area that was exposed by the excavator was schnitted down using shovels by several field crew members to try and expose any soil features further down (See Figure 11). After removing approximately 10 centimeters, features began to appear (See Figures 12 – 19). Once this happened the area was finely trowel and twelve grave shafts were exposed (See Figure 41). Along with the grave shafts, several places were shown to contain wood fragments near the grave shafts that were determined to have been wooden markers that would have previously marked the location of the graves. In the northeastern portion of the area stains were located that could be from the cemetery construction or could have possibly been posts or piers from a former structure that was located in the area prior to the cemetery's construction. The area was photographed and covered at the end of the field season.

## CHAPTER 5

### ANALYSIS

It is the artifacts of a site that help to fill in the gaps of the story that are told by the evidence in the ground archaeologists interpret. The bits of history recovered help tell the story of Mont Repose. The story they tell is not always the story that is expected. While there are artifacts that were recovered that were associated with the family cemetery of Samuel Gillison, there are many more that point to a longer and more varied use of the area. Over the course of three years of excavation on the cemetery area at Mont Repose, many artifacts were recovered. A total of 2,862 historic and prehistoric artifacts were analyzed. These artifacts ranged from domestic wares, to personal possessions, clothing and architectural components. Artifact distribution over the area varied by location both vertically and horizontally. In the following graphs, "Cemetery Area" refers to artifacts recovered from the area striped with the mini excavator (See Table 1 & 2).

The historic artifact section has been broken into subsections. Analysis is separated into domestic items, personal items, and structural items. Domestic items will include historic ceramics, food bone, and glass. The section on personal items will deal with artifacts such as clothing items and tobacco related pieces. The final section on structural items will contain totals of brick and mortar weight, as well as nails and window glass. The prehistoric section will consist of aboriginal pottery, flint flakes and projectile points.

#### Historic Ceramics

During excavations a total of 136 historic ceramic fragments were excavated. They were later identified and catalogued. These ceramic types include: British Brown stoneware, Rhenish

gray stoneware, Delftware, Cream wares, “Jackfield” wares, Lead-glazed slipwares, and several types of Pearl wares (See Table 1).

Level 1 had the highest concentration of historic ceramics. Pearl wares made up a total of seventy-five percent of the total ceramics recovered from this level. This was followed by six percent Delftware, four percent Cream ware and Lead-glazed slipwares (See Table 3 & 8).

Level 2 Zone A had the next highest concentration. Seventy-nine percent of Level 2 Zone A is comprised of Pearl ware, while Delftware makes up eight percent (See Table 4 & 9).

Level 2 Zone B had the third largest concentration and is near the beginning for the historic occupation of the area. Only sixty-three percent of the level and zone is made up Pearl wares, unlike previous zones. Colonoware makes up twenty-nine percent of the total ceramics for this level and zone (See Table 5 & 10).

The distribution of historic ceramics showed a trend of higher concentrations in the upper three areas, with only a single ceramic being found in Level 2 Zone C. No historic ceramics were found below this level. This suggested that the historical layer ended before Level 3 Zone A. Ceramic evidence suggests that the beginning historic occupation did not begin until Level 2 Zone B (See Table 7).

Using South’s Mean Ceramic Date formula of \_\_\_\_\_ (South, 1977), a date of 1797.936508 was extracted as a median date for this area of site occupation (See Table 44). Fragments of colonoware were excluded from the Mean Date formula. This median occupation date was earlier than the date established for the family cemetery of about 50 years. This would seem to indicate that the area had been used prior to establishment of the cemetery for other activities.



The peculiarity in the ceramic distribution is that there are ceramics of different mean ceramic dates found grouped together. Not only are they grouped together but they are found in levels with older types above new ones. For example, the Delftware that was recovered has a mean ceramic date of 1750, while the Pearl wares date to around 1810. Despite this, Delftware in this area of the site was recovered exclusively from Level 1 and Level 2 Zone A, while the Pearl ware was recovered from every level and zone. This juxtaposition of artifacts would seem to suggest that at some point the area was disturbed by some form of natural and/or mechanical means in at least the upper three layers. The amount of historic ceramics found would also suggest that there are other structures associated in the general area of the cemetery with plantation life.

## Glass

Historic glass was also found contained within the site. Glass distribution follows a similar pattern to the historic ceramics. Glass recovered ranged from green wine bottle fragments to various pharmaceutical bottle fragments. Glass noted in this analysis was assigned a typology number which corresponds with the glass color. The color typology can be found in the archaeology laboratory on the Georgia Southern University campus.

Level 1 contained the greatest concentration of glass, and was followed by Level 2 Zone A and Zone B. Level 2 Zone C contained nine glass fragments, noted as Pharmaceutical #15. However, Level 3 Zone A contained two pieces of historic glass. One piece of wine bottle #4 that weighed in at 3.4 grams along with one piece of glassware #7 that weighed less than a gram comprised the total glass found in Level 3 Zone A (See Tables 11 – 20).

## Food Bone

Units in the excavated area also produced a moderate amount of food bone. These were primarily pig with a few pieces of cow. A few of the pieces displayed butcher marks on the bone. Total count and weight for bones on the site saw a spike in Level 2 Zone A and again in Level 2 Zone C. This was followed by a decline in Level 2 Zone B and again in Level 3 Zone A (See Tables 21 – 26).

## Personal Items

The next section of artifact analysis covers personal items. Personal items located in the excavated area included tobacco related items, such as pipestem and bowls, decorative beads, buttons, and a small lead flower. This group of artifacts was deceptive in the sense that all could be related specifically to the cemetery area. Artifacts could be parts of coffin and clothing items used to dress the dead, or could have been left as grave goods on the graves.

### Beads

During the three years of excavation and investigation at the cemetery area, only two beads were recovered. The first bead recovered is a light blue faceted glass bead that was recovered from Level 1 of Unit N853 E692 (See Figure 29). The second bead recovered is a cobalt blue hand blown glass bead with raised bumps resembling those on a blackberry. It was recovered from Unit N861 E666 in Level 2 Zone A (See Figure 30). This unit was later discovered to be on top of two of the grave shafts.

### Button

Only one button was recovered from the cemetery area at Mont Repose. Using South's typology it is listed as a #9. It is a brass button with a soldered eye. The button is non-discrepant with no markings. The lone button was found in Level 1 of Unit N861 E675.

## Tobacco Related

Tobacco related artifacts found at the site occur only in four units. The unit with the most occurrences of pipestems and pipebowls was N853 E692. The highest level of concentration was Level 2 Zone A. Level 1 followed as the second highest concentration (See Figure 27).

## Structural

Excavations during the 2007, 2008 and 2009 field seasons at Mont Repose yielded a large amount of structural artifacts in the cemetery area. Various types of nails were found along with large concentrations of brick and mortar. Flat window glass was also among the artifacts recovered relating to a structure. Some of the artifacts are directly related to the construction of the family cemetery, while others could have a possible relation or be part of the disturbance seen at the site.

## Nails

The excavations yielded a large amount of historic nails. Types of nails recovered include: hand wrought, machine cut nails with hand wrought heads, fully machine cut nails and nails that were no longer identifiable. Total nails distribution over the site broke down with the largest amount being recovered from Level 1, followed by Level 2 Zone A and then by Level 2 Zone B (See Table 31). The upper three layers basically contained the concentration of nails with a few miscellaneous nails showing up in lower levels. This showed that the historic construction period at the site occurred first in the Level 2 Zone B level. The break down of type of nail by level showed that the oldest nails were located in Level 1. The other nails, which all shared about the same age were located in levels 1 and Zone 2 A through B (See Tables 32 – 36).

The two units with the largest concentration of nails were N853 E692 and N857 E684. Both of these units were outside the walled cemetery area and on the slope leading down into the rice canals. This would seem to suggest that the nails recovered came from another structure other than the cemetery. This pattern suggests that there are other structures in the area of the cemetery that are associated with the plantation.

### Window Glass

Window glass was also among the artifacts unearthed during the course of the excavations. This window glass would have been associated with a inhabited structure. This window glass would not have been part of the cemetery. While coffins that had viewing windows could have provided a source of window glass, disturbance to the site does not seem to have penetrated as deeply as the grave shafts extend making it highly unlikely that the glass found would be from the burials. Window glass was located in Levels 1, 2 Zone A and Zone B.

### Brick and Mortar

Another structural component found at the site was a large quantity of brick and mortar. Brick and mortar were found in every unit excavated in the cemetery area. This large volume of brick and mortar can be attributed to the construction of the cemetery. As specified in Samuel's will, a brick wall was built to enclose the family cemetery area. The mortar line for the base of the wall and brick found in situ next to the line showed that the cemetery was indeed enclosed as per Samuel's wishes. At some point during its existence the wall was destroyed and the brick was scattered over the area. The largest concentrations of brick were found in Level 2 Zone A. This zone contained a total of 54,370.8 grams worth of brick and mortar fragments. Level 1 contained a total of 23,401.22 grams, while Level 2 Zone B contained 9,567.6 grams (See Table 37).

## Prehistoric Artifacts

The other artifact component found at the site was that of prehistoric artifacts. The cemetery at Mont Repose Plantation yielded a large amount of prehistoric artifacts. These artifacts included aboriginal pottery, flint debitage, and projectile points. While the presence of such artifacts was not uncommon, the location in the levels and zones in which the artifacts was recovered is.

Pre-historic pottery was located in most units excavated. Highest levels of concentration were not in the expected layers. The highest concentrations came in the upper three layers. These layers contained a total of 685 pieces of prehistoric pottery making up eighty-nine percent of the total prehistoric pottery recovered. Level 2 Zone C contained only 53 pieces, which Level 3 Zone A containing 32 and Zone B having only 2 pieces.

The pattern of pre-historic pottery was also shown in that of flint debitage and projectile points located in the area. Level 2 Zone A contained 240 pieces of flint debitage and seven projectile points (See Table 39). Level 1 contained 170 pieces of flint debitage and three projectile points (See Table 38). Level 2 Zone B contained a total of twenty-two pieces of flint and one projectile point (See Table 40).

Comparing historic and prehistoric artifacts showed another aspects of the site. Looking at the artifacts by count, which did not account for brick and mortar, prehistoric artifacts recovered from the cemetery area accounts for fifty-nine percent of the artifacts recovered. Historic artifacts only accounted for forty-nine percent of the artifacts recovered. If you compare the artifacts by weight and include brick and mortar, historic artifacts make up ninety-five percent of the total amount of recovered artifacts.

Looking by Level and Zone at the distribution of historic and prehistoric artifacts shows that in each area the amount of prehistoric artifacts overwhelmingly exceeded the amount of historic artifacts. Level 1 is made up of 75% prehistoric artifacts by count. Level 2 Zone A was made up of eighty-nine percent of prehistoric artifacts. Eighty-two percent of Level 2 Zone B was made up of prehistoric artifacts. Historic artifacts made up only two percent of Level 2 Zone C.

The overwhelming amount of prehistoric artifacts found in the upper levels of the area excavated at the cemetery would seem out of place on most historic sites. However, the distribution in the cemetery area can be explained as already stated. The site of the cemetery is located on a bluff overlooking rice canals and the Coosawhatchie River. The area had been a major area of occupation during the late Archaic period through the late Woodland period. This left a large concentration of prehistoric accumulation over the site. As the area was being converted into an area for cemetery use the graveshafts were dug through the top historic layers and through the lower prehistoric layers. Once this occurred the backfill for the graveshafts contained the prehistoric pieces from the lower level. This accounted for the prehistoric distribution in the cemetery area.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

In a sleepy little coastal town in southern South Carolina lies the remnants of a once prosperous community. At the heart of that town's prosperity was the thriving rice cultivation, centered around modest plantations that dotted the local country side. It was the Gillison family and their plantation known as Mont Repose that has held the interest of archeologists at Georgia Southern University for more than a decade. Our preconceived notions were that there surely must have been more structures associated with the occupation of Mont Repose besides the lone detached kitchen structure that had been located previously on the site. Earlier shovel tests of the property had shown areas of high concentrations of artifacts such as brick and mortar, nails, glass, ceramics, and others. Using these previous tests, we decided to further test these areas for occupation structures. We were determined to see if there was indeed anything there of significance and, if so, to determine what use they had held.

After having looked at the previous field crew's shovel tests, I decided on an area located on a bluff overlooking former rice canals and the Coosawhatchie River as this seemed to be a good location to begin the testing. The area had shown a large concentration of ceramics, brick and mortar, and nails indicating that at least one, if not more, structures had resided in the area. The area is located near a sloping access to the canal below which seemed to indicate the area would have been in use during the period of rice production at the site. My original inclination was that the area was used heavily by plantation slaves and may have contained either lodgings or buildings associated with the rice production.

The results we found were indeed different than those first hypothesized but by no means were they any less significant. The findings also raised many new questions about the site. Were

the Gillison's the first owners to use the land? If not, then who were the previous occupants of the site? And what use for it did they have? What buildings could have been located in that area prior to the construction of the family cemetery? Where are the other structures? These are the types of questions left to us and in the following sections they will be addressed. Other possible questions for further research at the site will be discussed.

During the three year investigation of the area we have learned several things. We have located the former Gillison family cemetery. We know that the cemetery contains members of the Gillison family through several means. The first is through the will of Samuel Gillison. In his will, Samuel stated that his executors are to construct a family cemetery for himself and his family. He also stated that the cemetery is to be enclosed. During the excavations, the remnants of the former wall that once surrounded the cemetery were found along with at least thirteen grave shafts. The other piece of information we have to identify the cemetery as being for the family Gillison is the discovery of a small foot stone. The foot stone was located next to a large live oak located on the bluff. The stone had been pushed up against the tree during earlier disturbance of the site. The foot stone was marked with the initials E.G.B. Through extensive research and combing of articles by Dr. Sue Moore, we learned that the initials E.G.B. stood for Eliza Gillison Butler. Eliza was the granddaughter of Samuel and was the daughter of Sarah Gillison and James Joseph Butler. While we know that one of the graves belonged to Eliza, no other markers from the cemetery remain. A few pieces of broken head stone were recovered but no names of the deceased remained. Of the few words still legible on the stones is that of a tomb stone maker from Charleston, SC named White. Though no names remain, we can assume that according to Samuel's will that he himself is buried within the cemetery. We also assume that his wife is also buried within the cemetery along with their daughter, Sarah, mother of Eliza. On



further investigation, we learned that James Joseph Butler is buried in a cemetery in Barnwell, SC. We know that Sarah is not buried with him. We also know that Sarah is not in the Grahamville cemetery where her sister is buried and isn't in the Gillisonville cemetery. This accounts for at least four of the grave shafts in the cemetery, but what of the others? Looking back through the census records, you can see that Samuel had several children that never lived past infancy and childhood. These children, while never named in the census records, are the probable candidates for the remaining graves as are other Butler children.

While we know that the cemetery is the Gillison family cemetery, there are still many questions remaining. One of the first questions is where did the large amounts of ceramics, nails, and glass come from? The mean ceramic date of 1796 is still far from the construction date of the cemetery during the 1840s. One possible answer is that there were structures located in the area of the cemetery prior to its construction. These buildings could have been from an earlier occupation of the site predating the Gillison's that were gone before they assumed ownership of the property. Given the mean date of 1796, this scenario seems likely. The structures could have also remained in use by the Gillison's but removed in order to build the cemetery because of its location on the edge of the bluff overlooking the river.

Another possibility is that the artifacts are not from the cemetery area at all. These artifacts could have ended up in the area due to human interference. After ceasing to be used as a cemetery, the area was returned to agricultural use. This could be an explanation for the artifacts' location now. There have also been reports by relatives of a former property owner that during the 1950s the area was stripped by bulldozers. A large portion of the bluff was scraped over the edge in an attempt to locate Civil War relics. Large amounts of brick and other artifacts can be

observed on the downward slope and at the bottom of the bluff. If this is the case, buildings remain that were once in the area that have been strewn over the cemetery area.

Whether there were once structures located on the actual cemetery site or in the surrounding areas, the amount of domestic and personal artifacts would suggest that there were indeed structures in the area. These structures could have been used for either habitation by slaves or could have also been frequently used buildings involved in the day-to-day activities of the plantation. A combination of both possibilities could also be an explanation. Further testing in the areas surrounding the area around the cemetery could help reveal the past uses of the area. New excavations could reveal the location and dimension of structures. It would also be useful in demonstrating the level of disturbance that has occurred at the site. Test units going down the slope of the bluff and at the bottom could help to more clearly determine what was located at the top of the bluff during the historic occupation.

The large amounts of prehistoric artifacts found raise more questions. Why are there so many prehistoric pieces located in a historic site? The answer to this, I believe, lies in the area's use. Once the area was established as a cemetery and burials commenced, the grave shafts that were dug, went through layers associated with a much older and longer prehistoric occupation of the site. As the shafts were dug, the prehistoric artifacts were brought up in the backfill. This would explain the juxtaposition of the artifacts into the historic layers of the site.

This also offers further research opportunities. Further analysis of the prehistoric artifacts that were recovered could give a better understanding of the time of occupation of the site during prehistoric times. From the amount of artifacts recovered, it is clear that there is a large prehistoric component imbedded in Mont Repose. Further excavations at Mount Repose, focusing on the prehistoric aspects of the site, could yield years of further research and findings.

Other area of research could be with the ceramics and personal artifacts recovered. It is possible that some of the artifacts found are not in their current location by intrusive means. It is possible that some of the artifacts could have been left as grave goods for the deceased. Further research areas along this line may include searching the literature to determine if there is any precedence of grave goods for Anglo burials such as the tradition found in African American burials. To accompany this area of further thought is that if there is not a precedence of grave offerings among Anglo burials, could there be evidence of slaves leaving goods on the graves of their former masters? If it is possible, then what reasons would be behind it? Do they share the common logic associated with leaving of goods at African burials, or is it different entirely? This is an interesting area of possible further pursuit as it raises further questions about the relationship between slaves and their owners.

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APPENDIX A  
FIGURES AND ARTIFACT PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1: Closing of Test Unit A



Figure 2: Closing Level 1 of Unit N861 E674



Figure 3: Units N861 E674-672 & N859 E674-671.





Figure 4: Feature of a graveshaft appearing in Unit N855 E664



Figure 5: Clay features along with mortar and post fragments in lower right corner





Figure 6: Brick with mortar circle and soil stain from wooden post.



Figure 7: Exploratory trench dug at the end of the 2008 field season. Wooden post from cemetery in place within the mortar line of the wall.



Figure 8: Wooden post in situ.





Figure 9: Remnants of second wooden post set in mortar wall.



Figure 10: Mini excavator removing the plow zone from the cemetery area in May 2009.





Figure 11: Volunteers schnitting exposed cemetery area.



Figure 12: Mortar line for northern cemetery wall exposed, with brick on the northern side.





Figure 13: Third post in mortar.



Figure 14: Two grave shafts exposed after troweling.





Figure 15: Six grave shafts with northern mortar line for wall.



Figure 16: Grave shaft.





Figure 17: Grave shaft 2.



Figure 18: Four grave shafts





Figure 19: One grave shaft and northern wall mortar line.



Figure 20: Assorted Punctated Aboriginal Pottery collected from cemetery.



Figure 21: Assorted Aboriginal Pottery collected at the cemetery 1.



Figure 22: Assorted Aboriginal Pottery collected at the cemetery 2.





Figure 23: Assorted Aboriginal Pottery collected at the cemetery 3.



Figure 24: Assorted Aboriginal Pottery collected at the cemetery 4.



Figure 25: Assorted Aboriginal Pottery collected at the cemetery 5.



Figure 26: Aboriginal Pottery with handle collected at cemetery.





Figure 27: Red and white clay pipes found during excavations.



Figure 28: Delftware

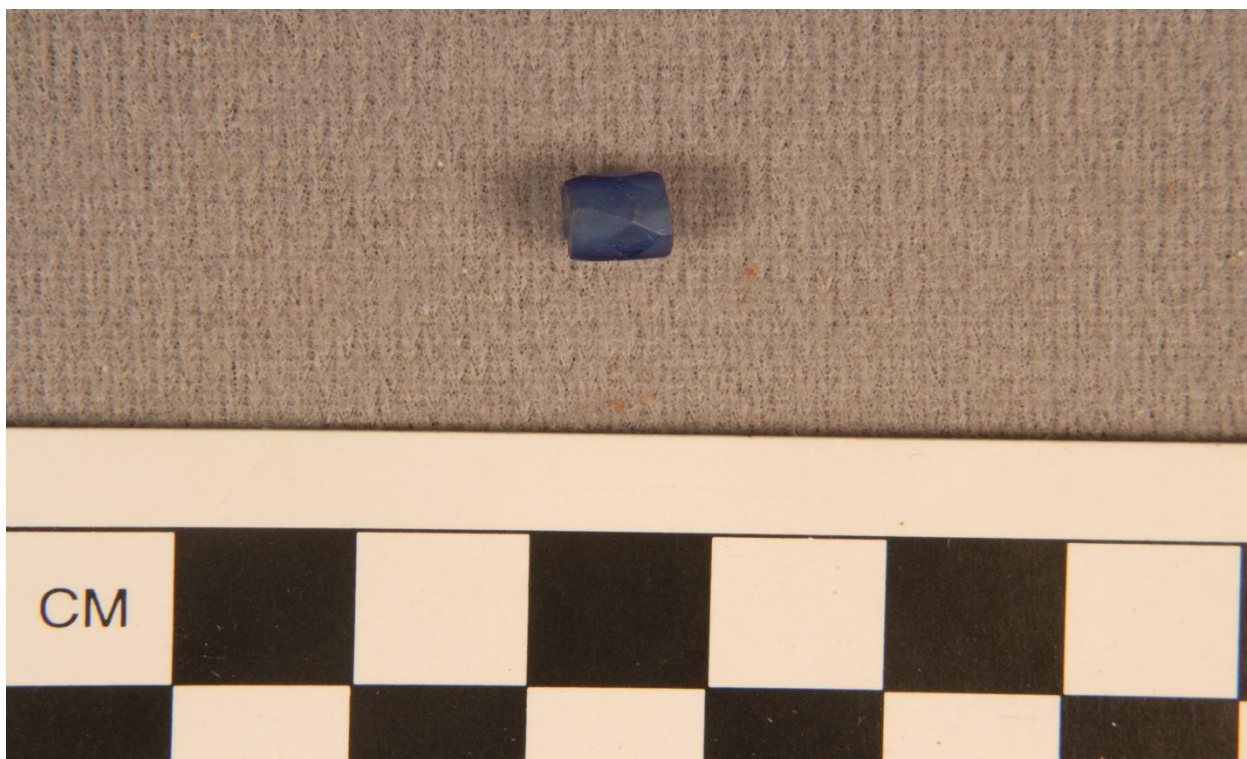


Figure 29: Blue faceted found in Unit

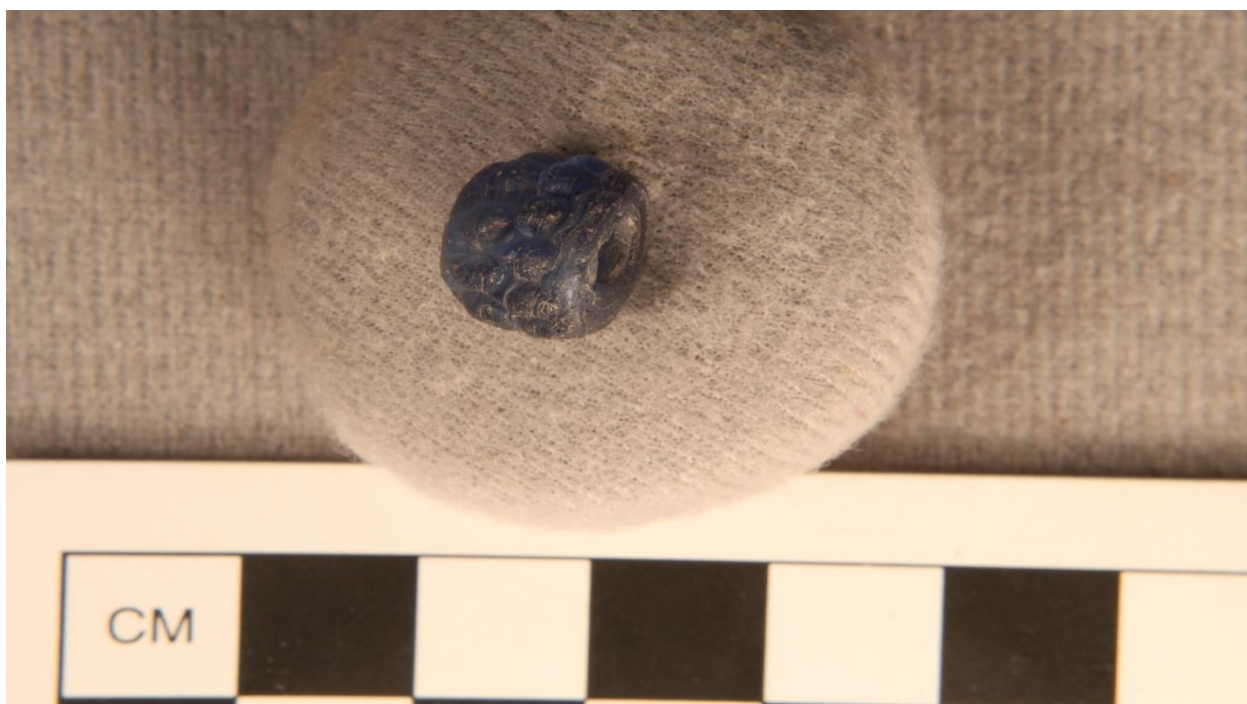


Figure 30: Blue glass bead with raised bumps found in Unit





Figure 31: Partial lead flower. Possible coffin ornamentation.



Figure 32: Part of a colonoware vessel found in the cemetery area.

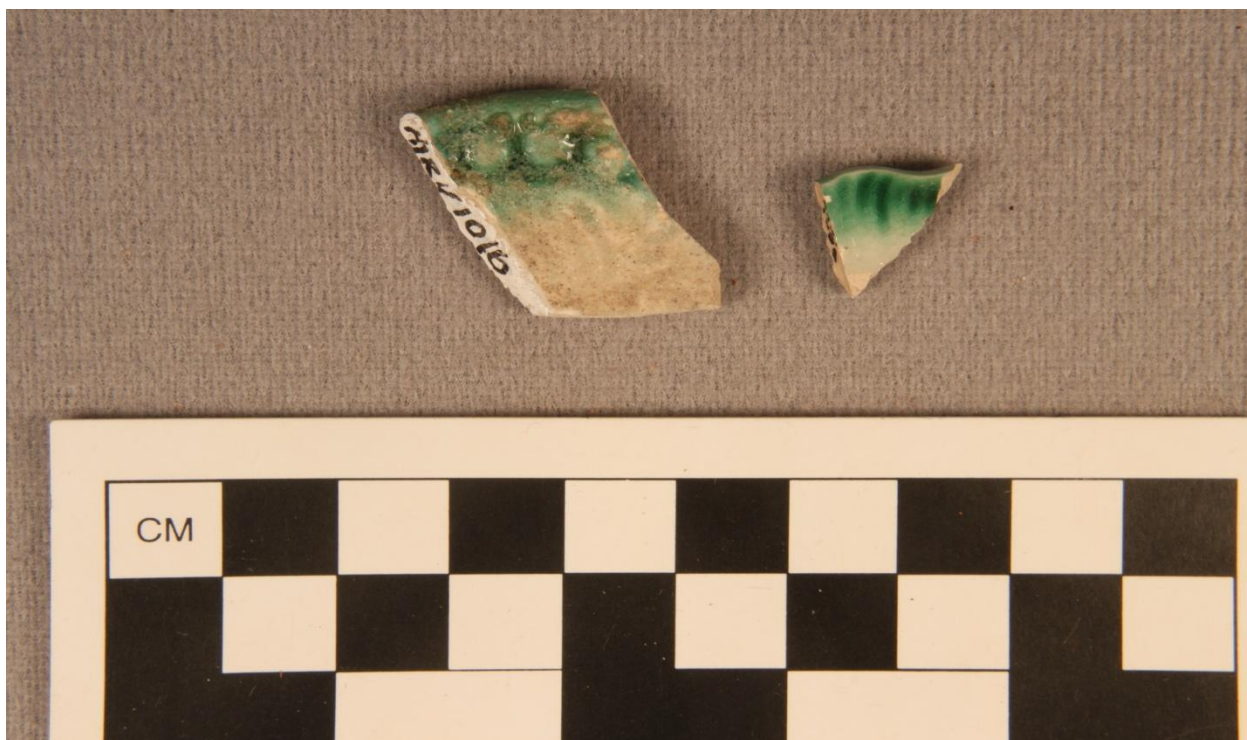


Figure 33: Green Shell-edge Pearlware found during excavations.



Figure 34: Blue Shell-edge Pearlware found during excavations.





Figure 35: Willow Transfer Pearlware found during excavations.



Figure 36: Assorted Blue Transfer-printed Pearlware found during excavations.

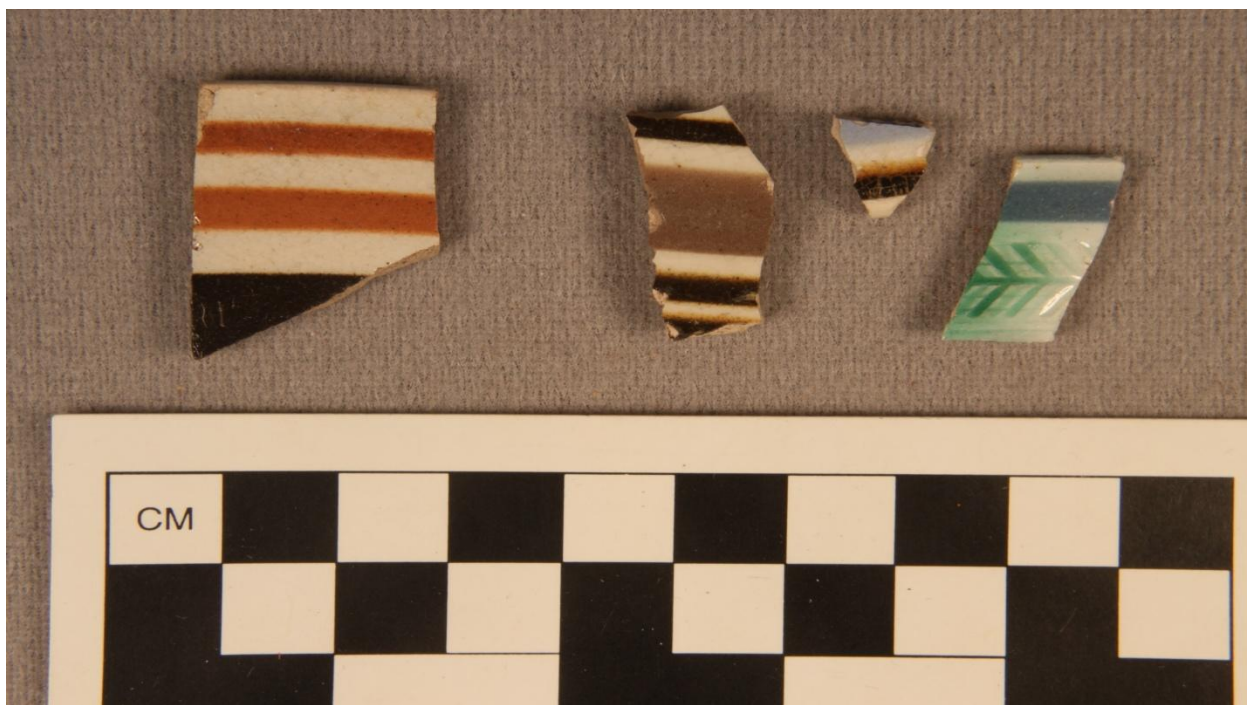


Figure 37: Assorted Annular Pearlware.



Figure 38: Hand painted Pearlware.





Figure 39: Eliza Gillison Butler's Footstone.



Figure 40: Headstone Maker "White".

# Gillison Cemetery, Mont Repose Plantation Coosawhatchie, SC

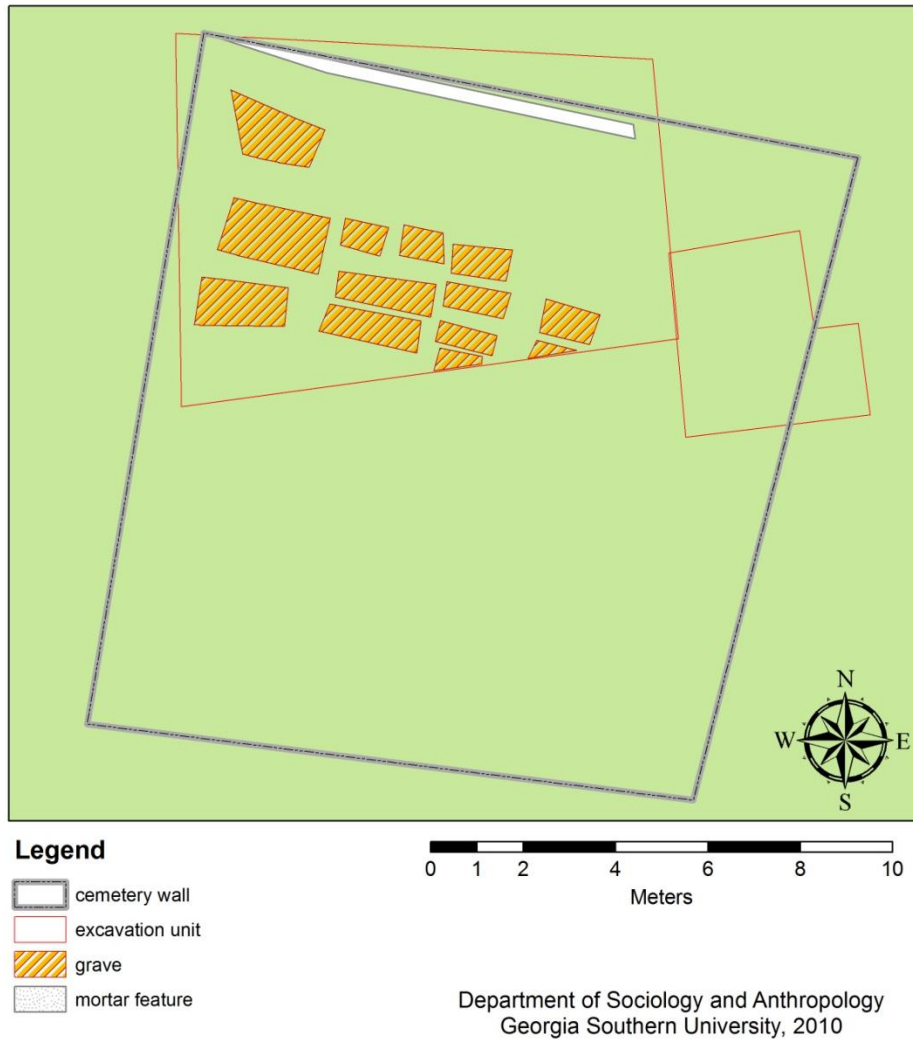


Figure 41: Gillison Cemetery Map.

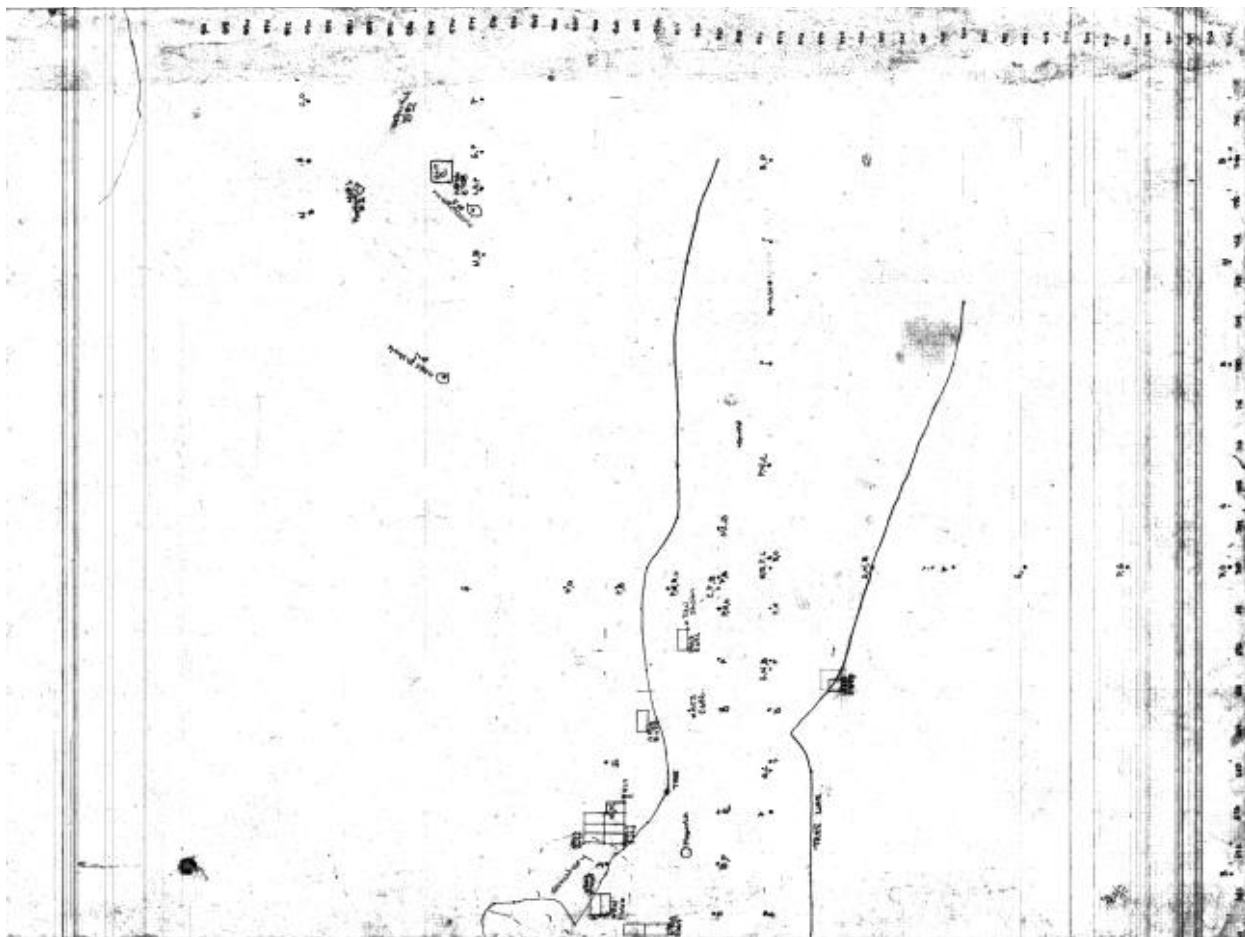


Figure 42: Site map of 2007 -2008 excavations (Part 1)

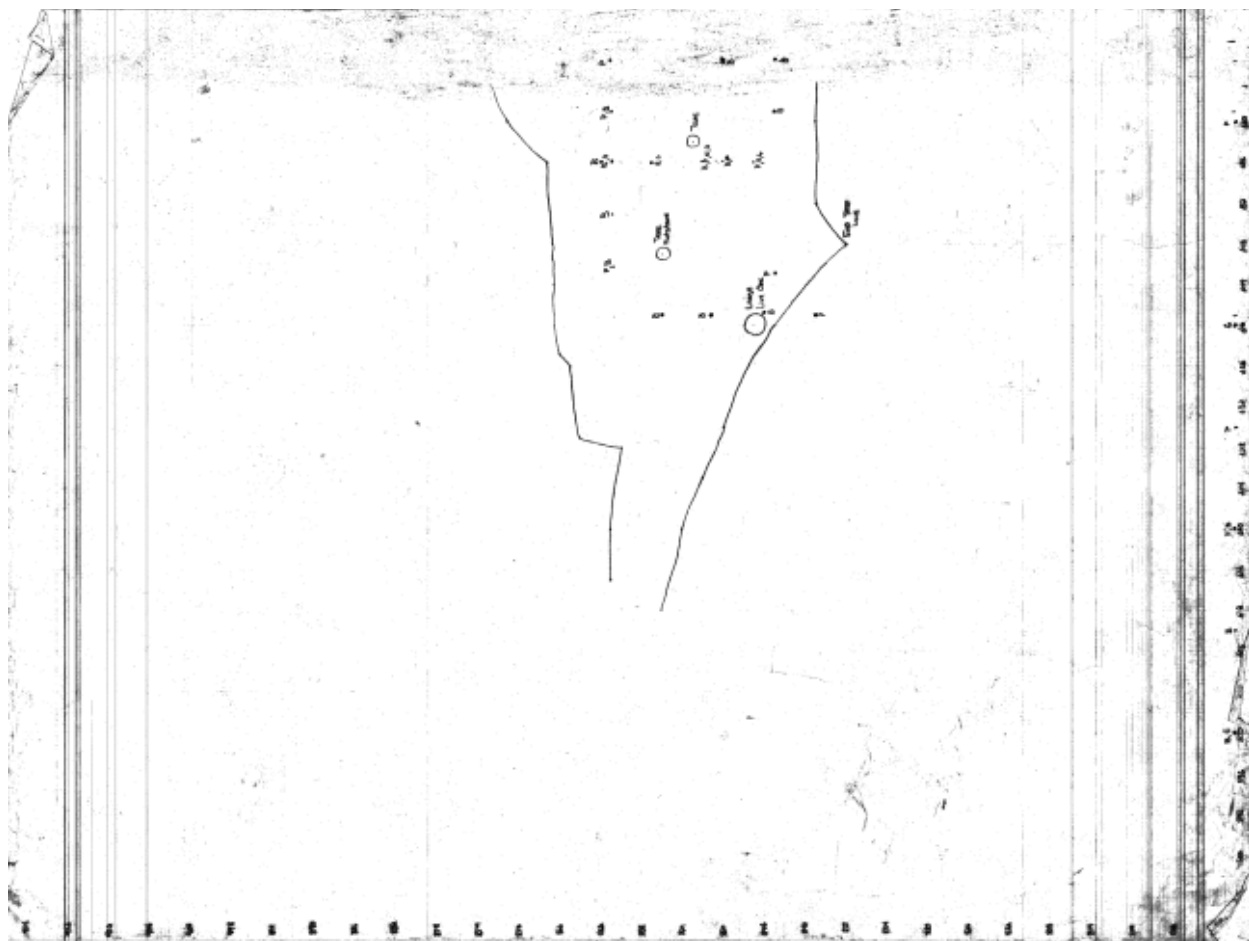


Figure 43: Site map of 2007 -2008 excavations (Part 2).



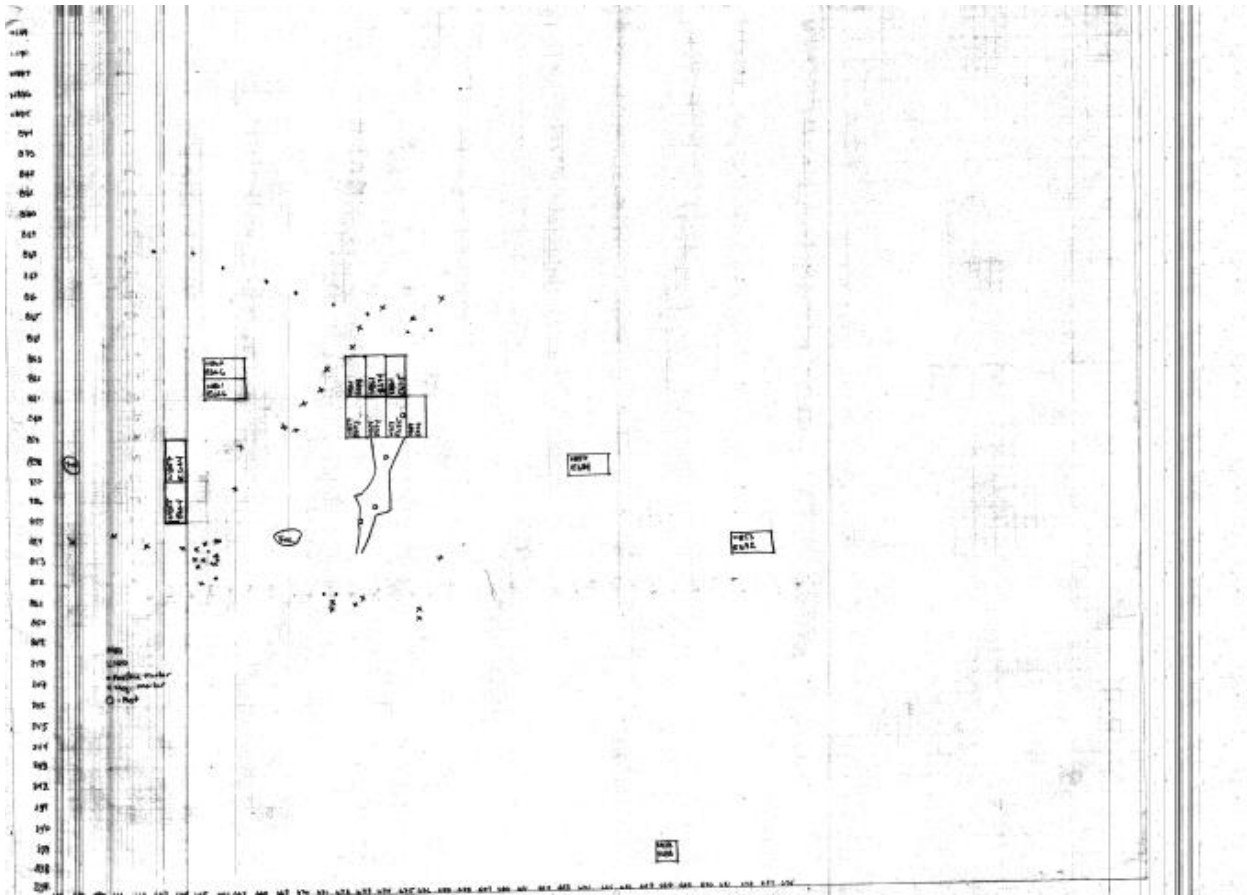


Figure 44: Map of units, auger tests and exploratory trench.

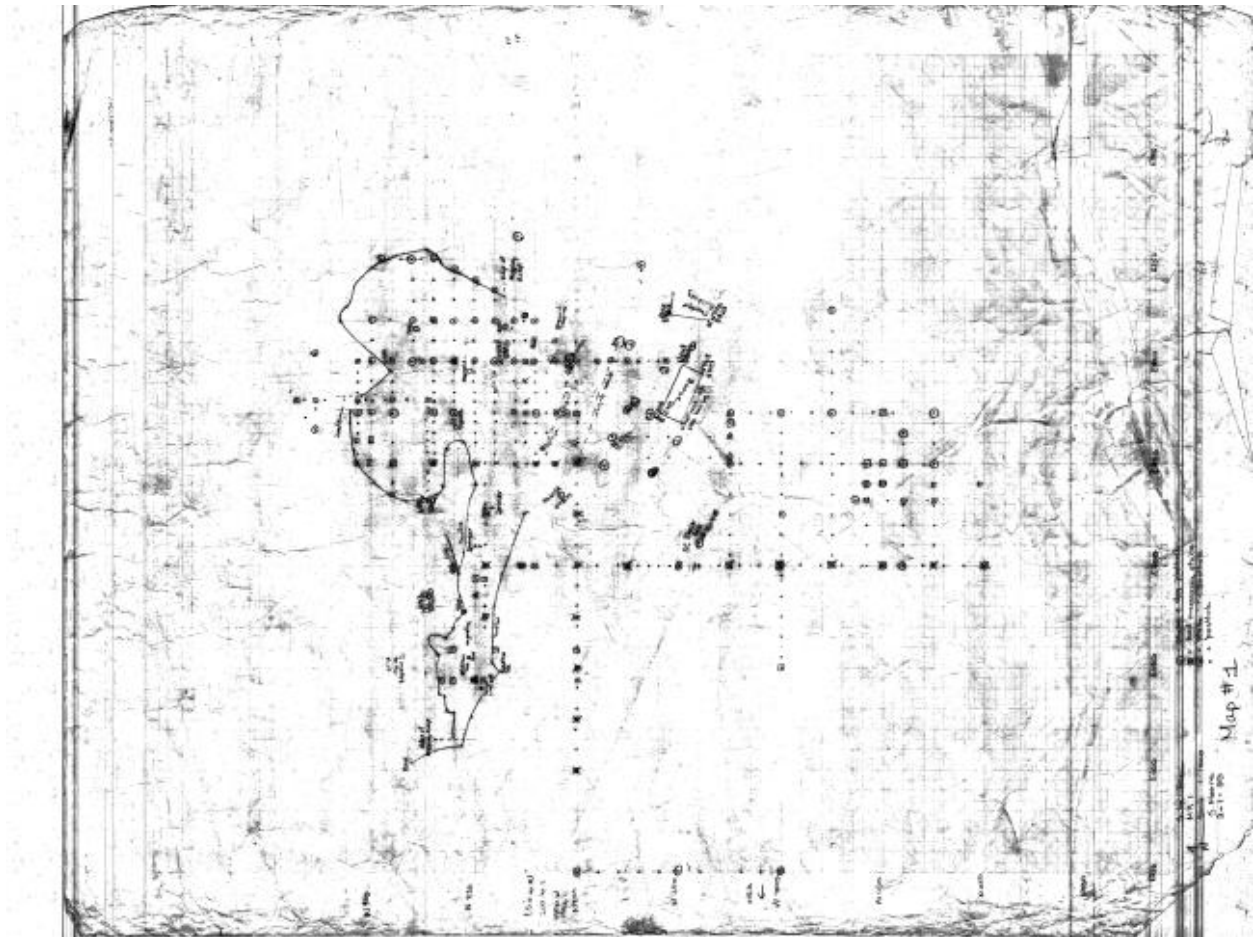


Figure 45: Overall site map for 38JA407. Includes positive and negative posthole tests, standing structures, and present utilities.

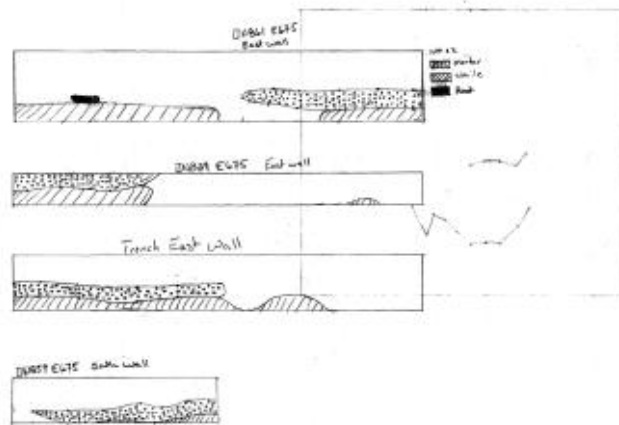


Figure 46: East wall profile for Units N861 E675, N859 E675, and exploratory trench. South wall of N859 E675 also included.

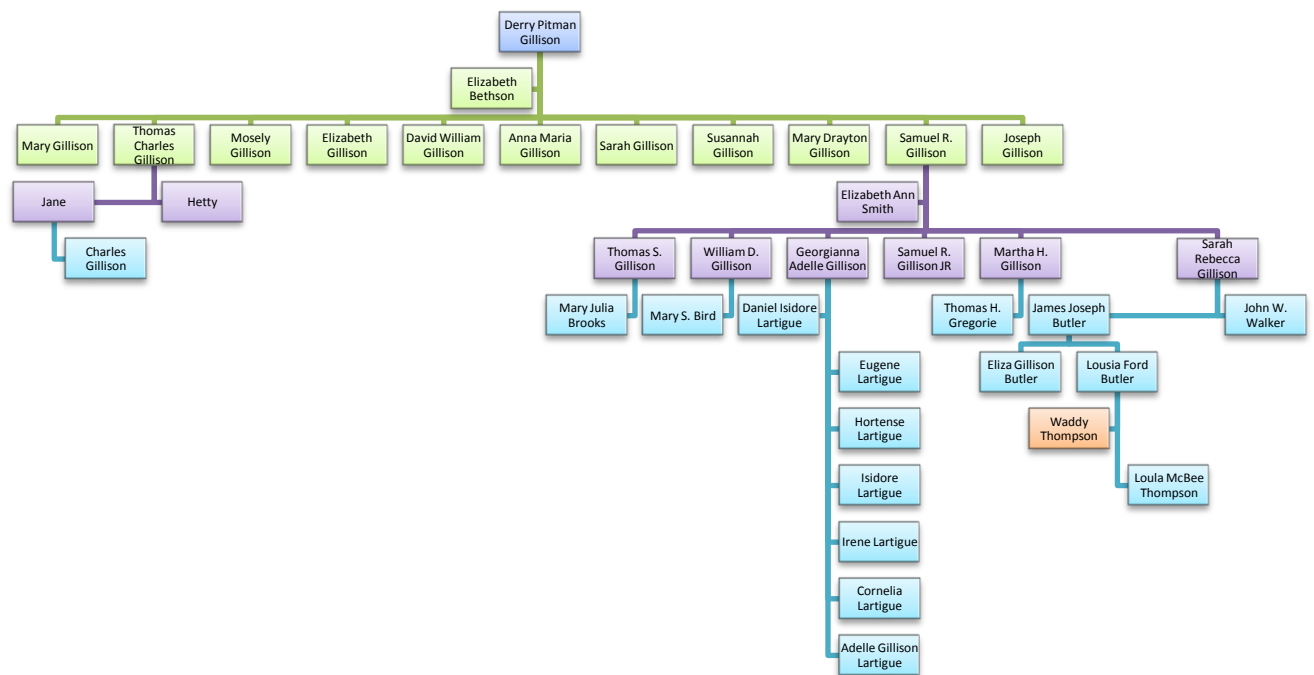


Figure 47: Gillison Family Tree

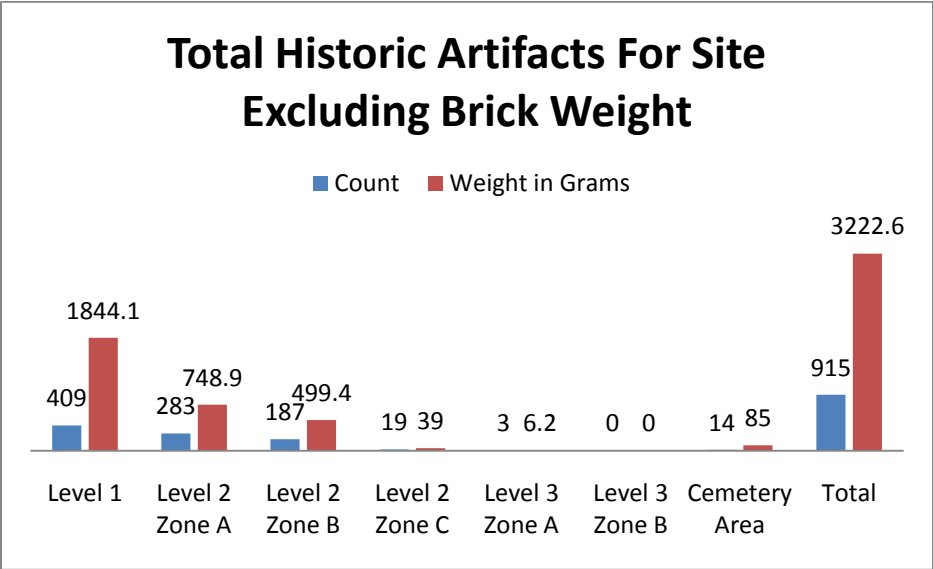


Table 1: Historic artifacts by level and zone and total for site.

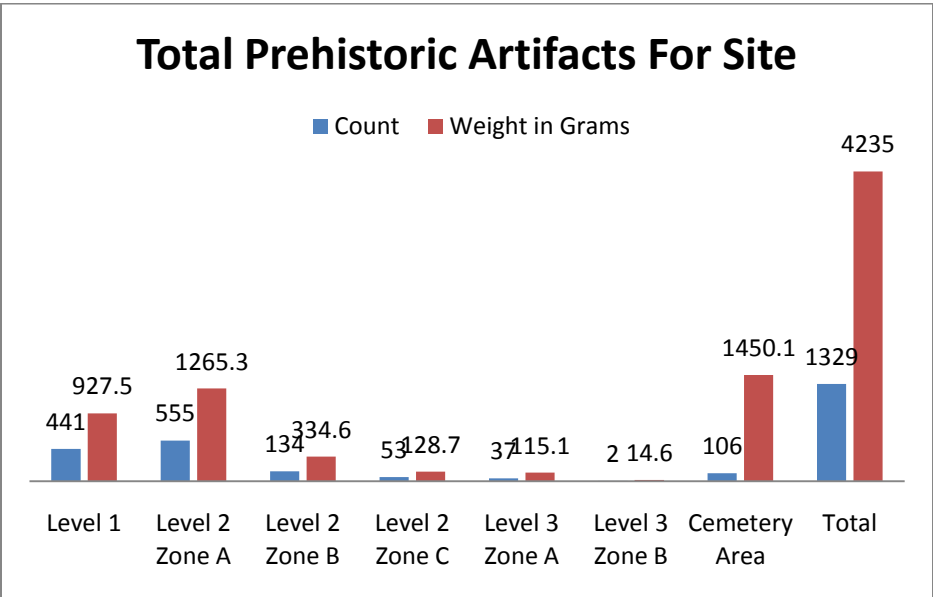


Table 2: Prehistoric artifact totals for level, zone and overall.

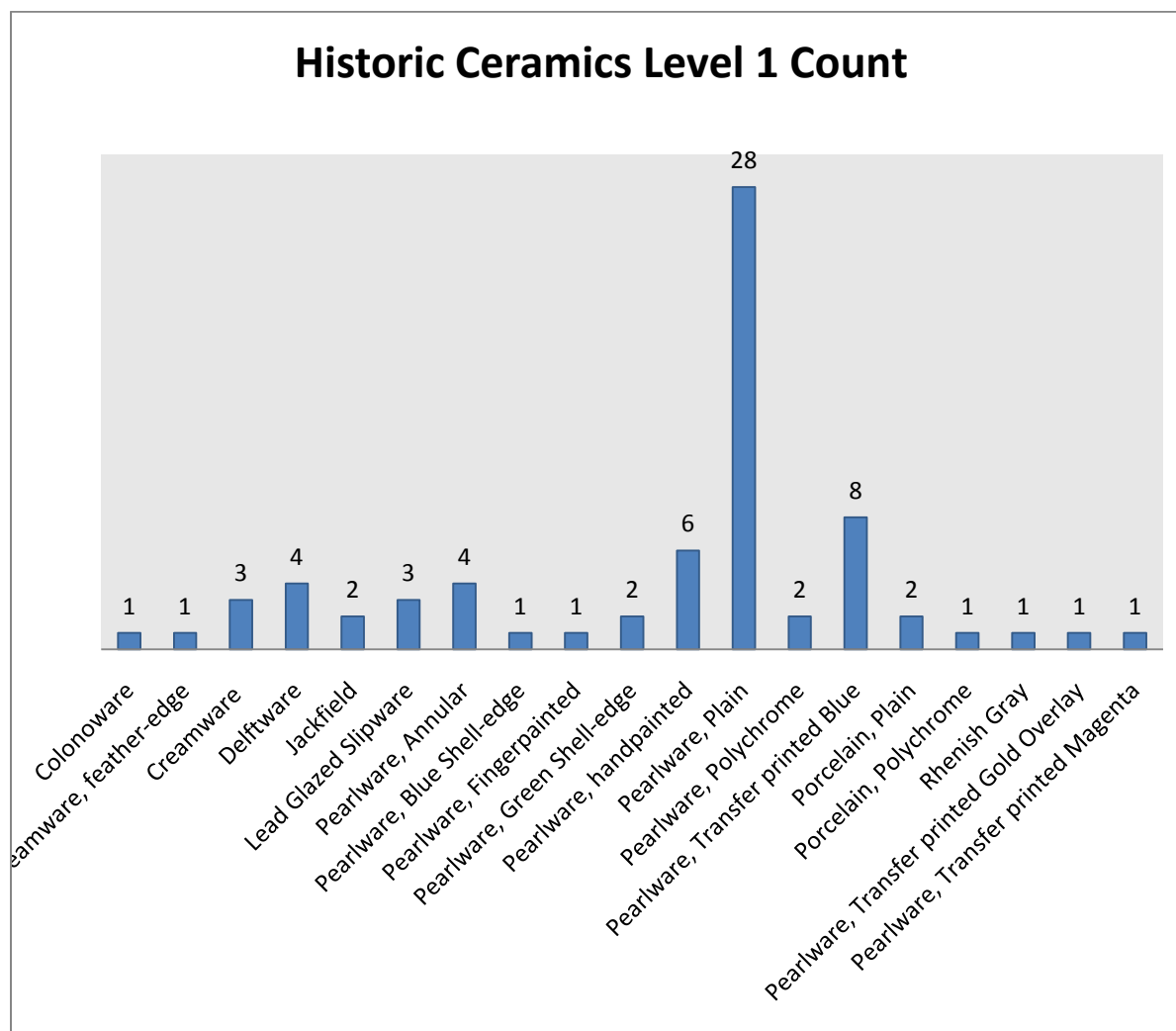


Table 3: Historic Ceramics for Level 1 by count.

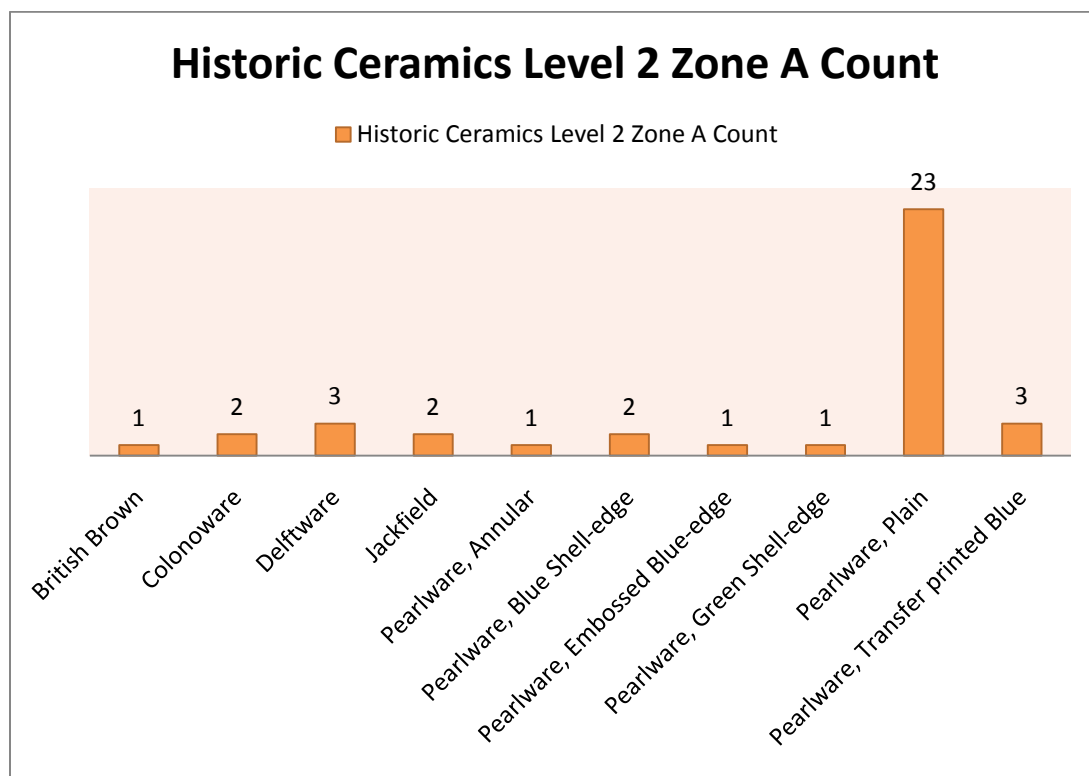


Table 4: Historic Ceramics for Level 2 Zone A by count.

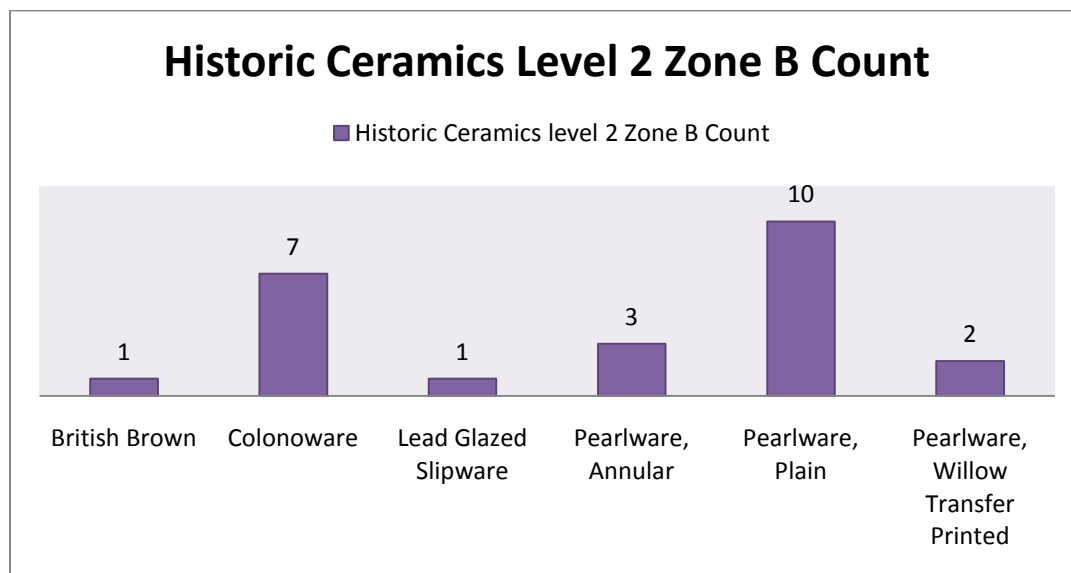


Table 5: Historic Ceramics for Level 2 Zone B by count.

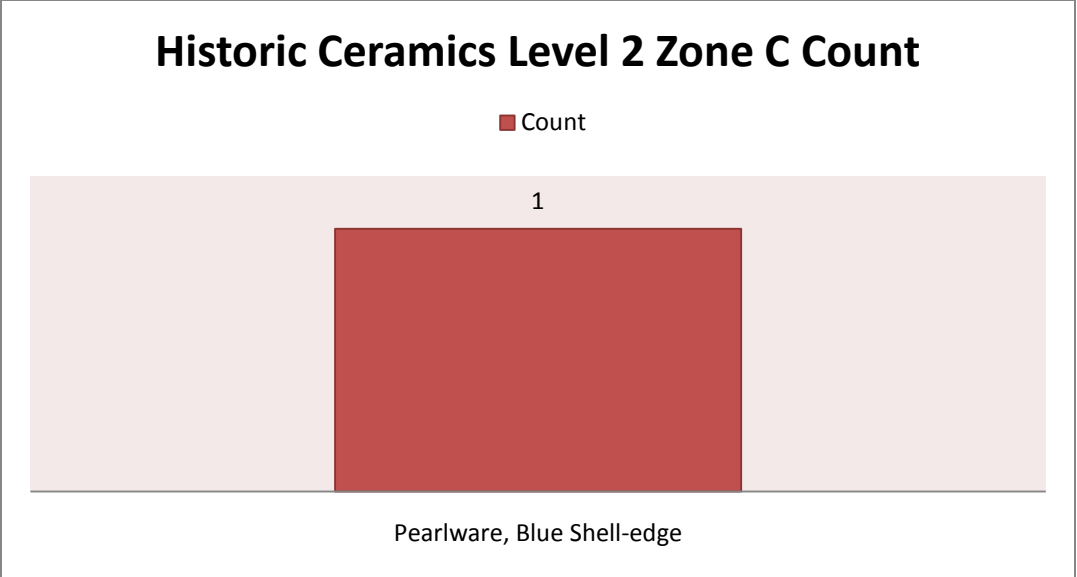


Table 6: Historic Ceramics for Level 2 Zone C by count.

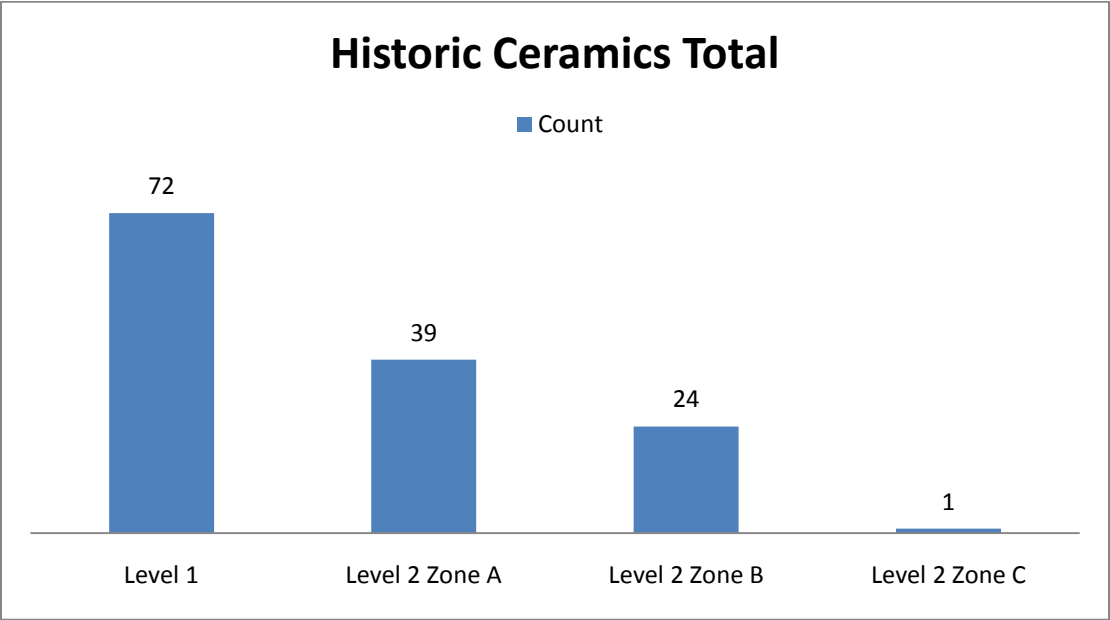


Table 7: Total count for historic ceramics by Level and Zone.



## Historic Ceramic Percentages for Level 1

■ Colonoware      ■ Creamware      ■ Delftware  
 ■ Jackfield      ■ Lead Glazed Slipware      ■ Porcelain  
 ■ Rhenish Gray      ■ Pearlware

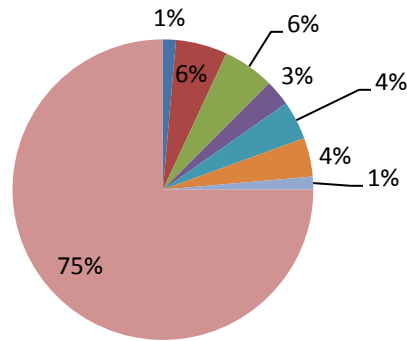


Table 8: Historic ceramic percentages for Level 1.

## Historic Ceramic Percentages for Level 2 Zone A

■ British Brown      ■ Colonoware      ■ Delftware      ■ Jackfield      ■ Pearlware

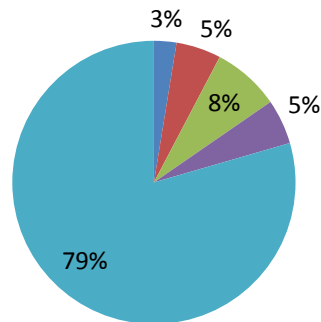


Table 9: Historic ceramic percentages for Level 2 Zone A.

## Historic Ceramic Percentages for Level 2 Zone B

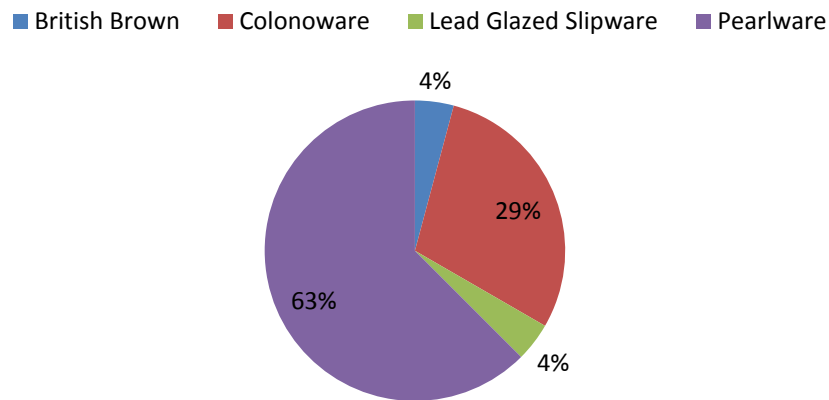


Table 10: Historic ceramic percentages for Level 2 Zone B.

## Glass For Site

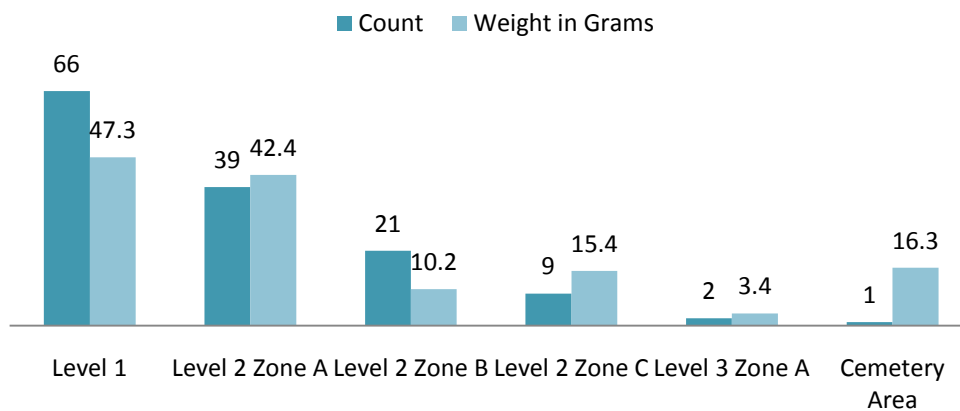


Table 11: Glass for site by count and weight.

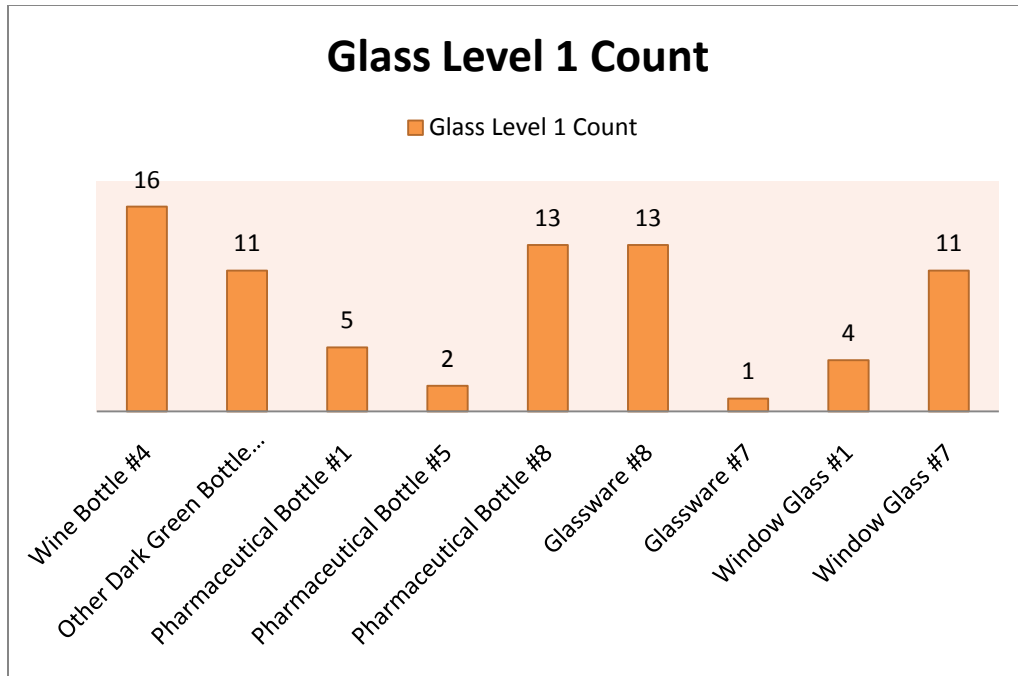


Table 12: Glass count for Level 1.

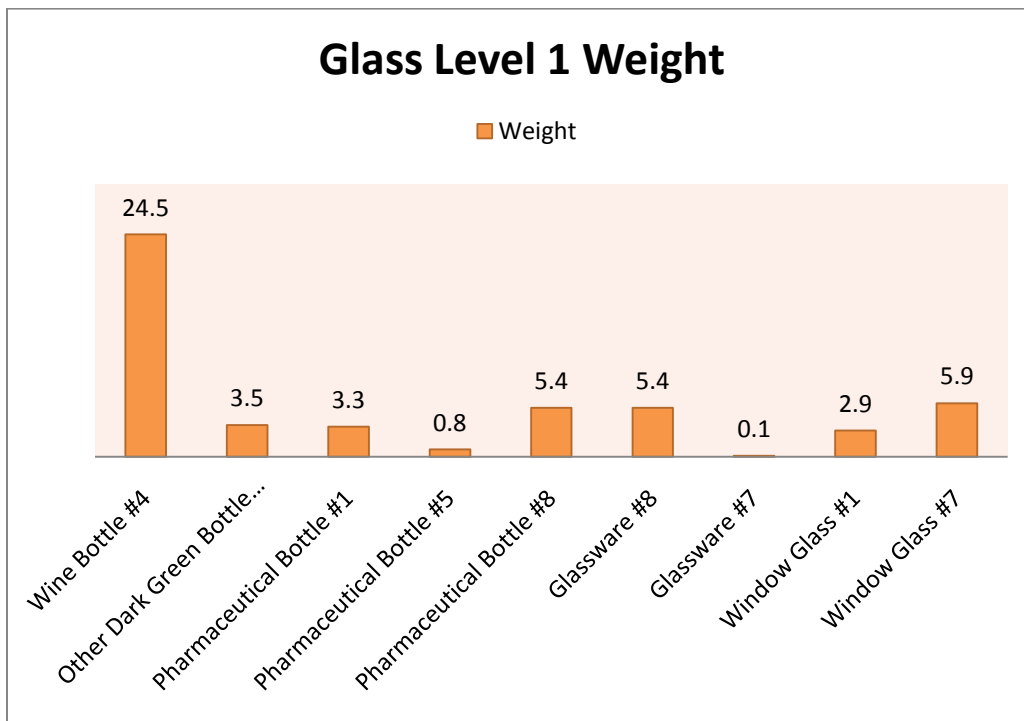


Table 13: Glass weight for Level 1

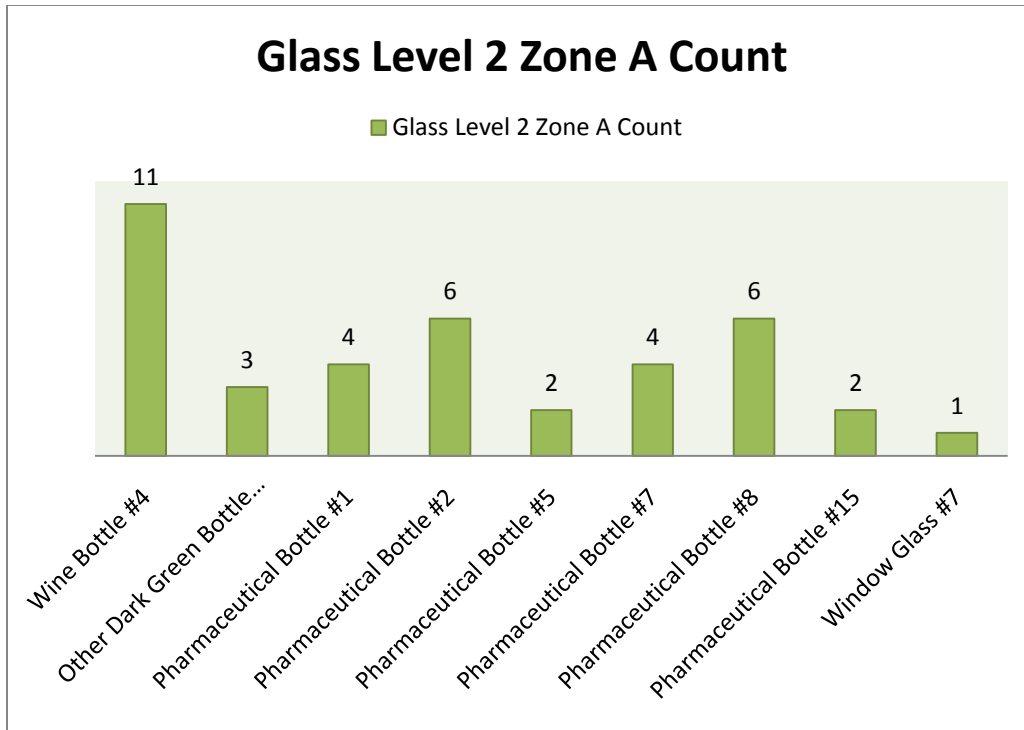


Table 14: Glass count for Level 2 Zone A.

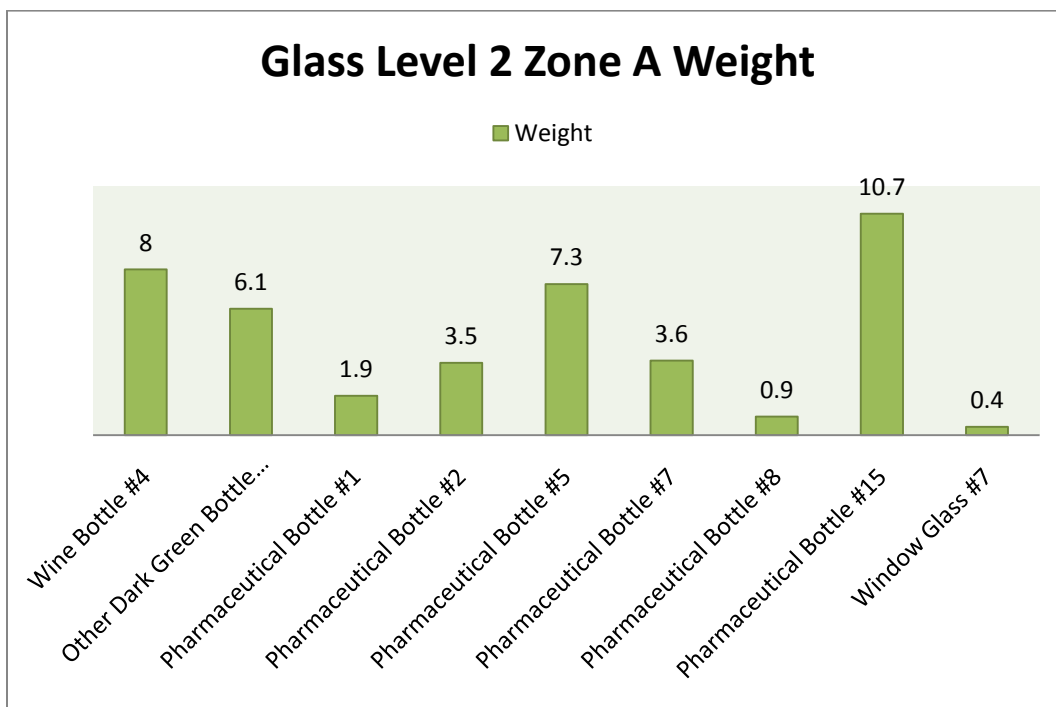


Table 15: Glass weight for Level 2 Zone A.

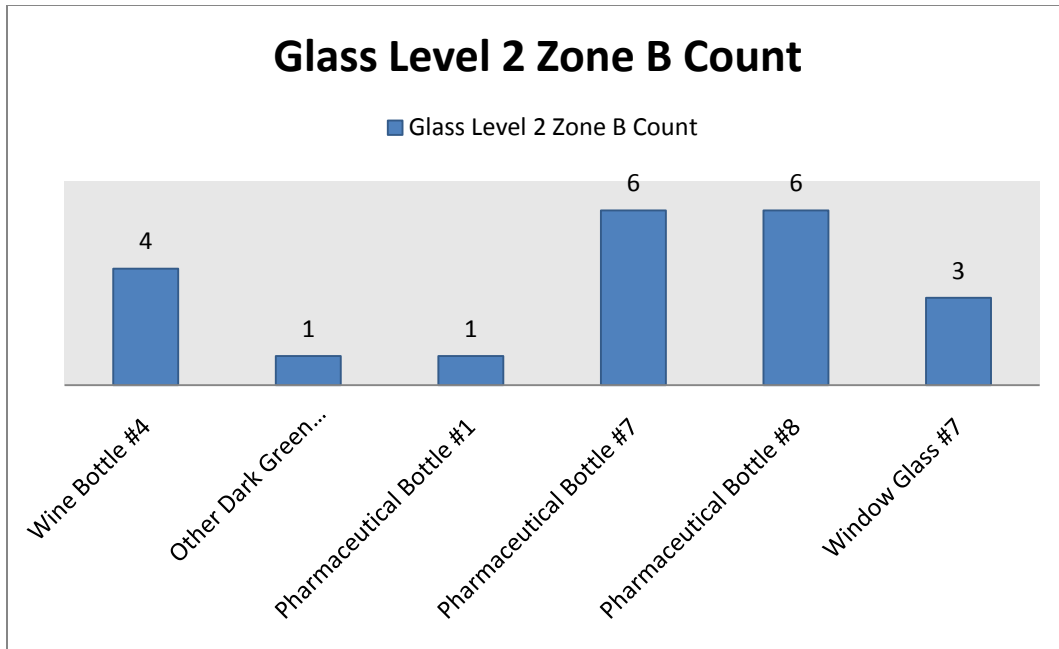


Table 16: Glass count for Level 2 Zone B.

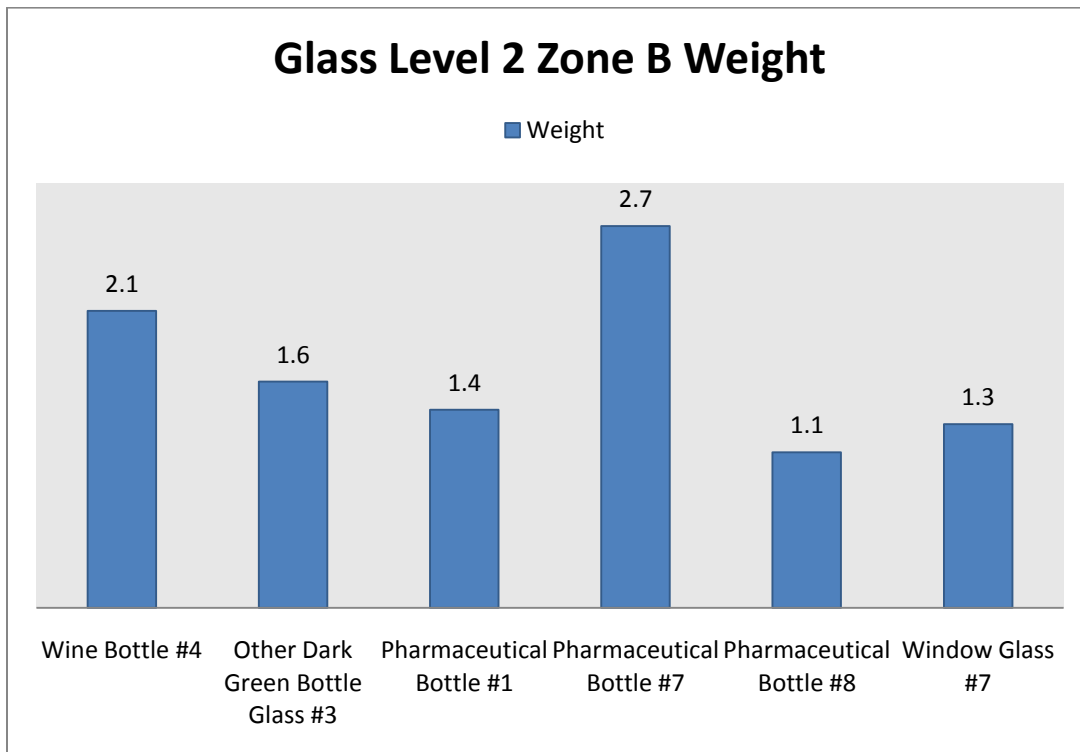


Table 17: Glass weight for Level 2 Zone B.



Table 18: Glass count for Level 2 Zone C

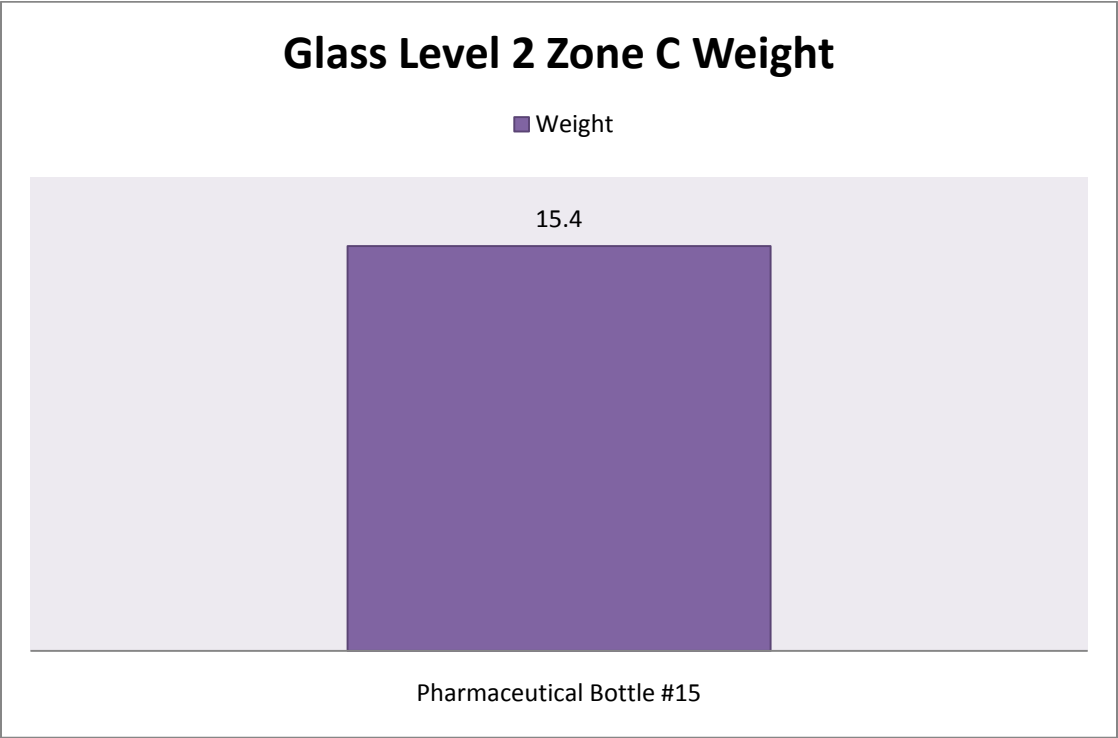


Table 19: Glass weight for Level 2 Zone C.

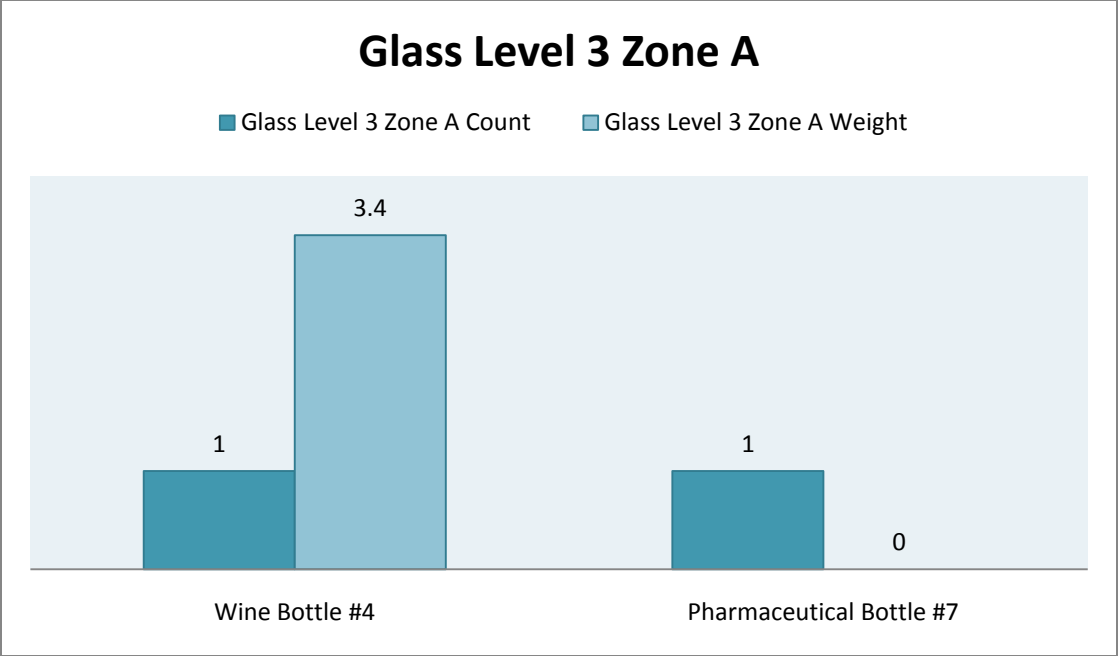


Table 20: Glass count and weight for Level 3 Zone A.

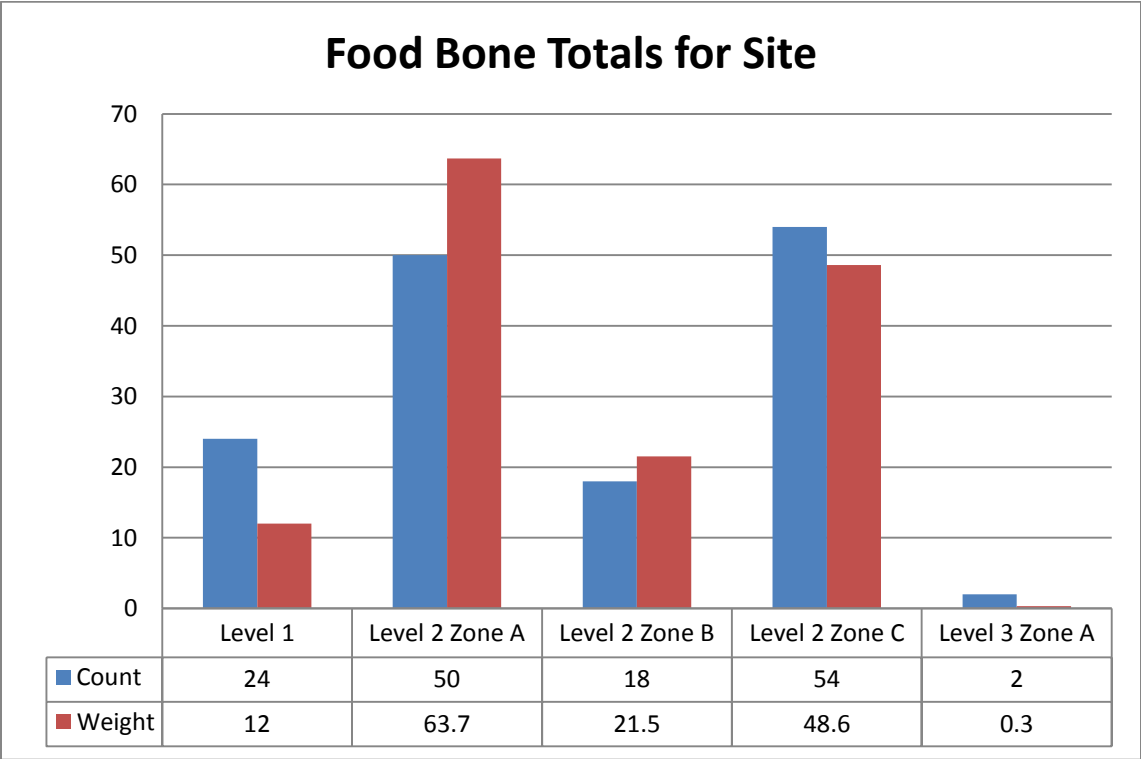


Table 21: Food Bone count and weight by level and zone.

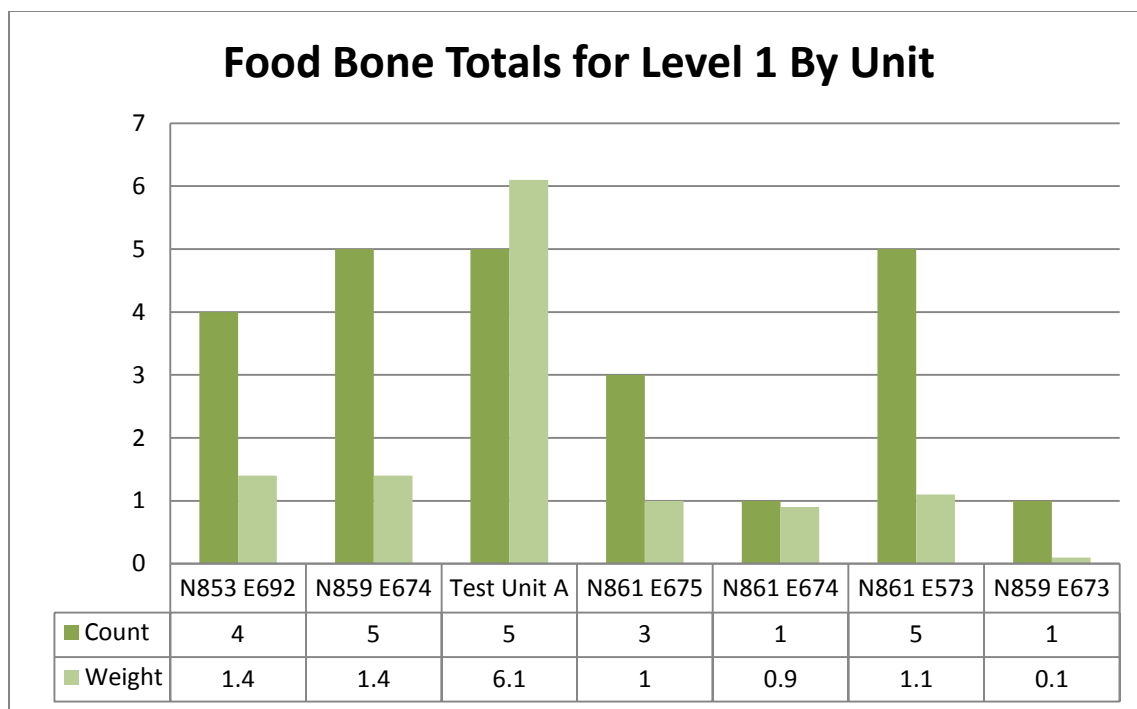


Table 22: Food Bone Totals for Level 1.

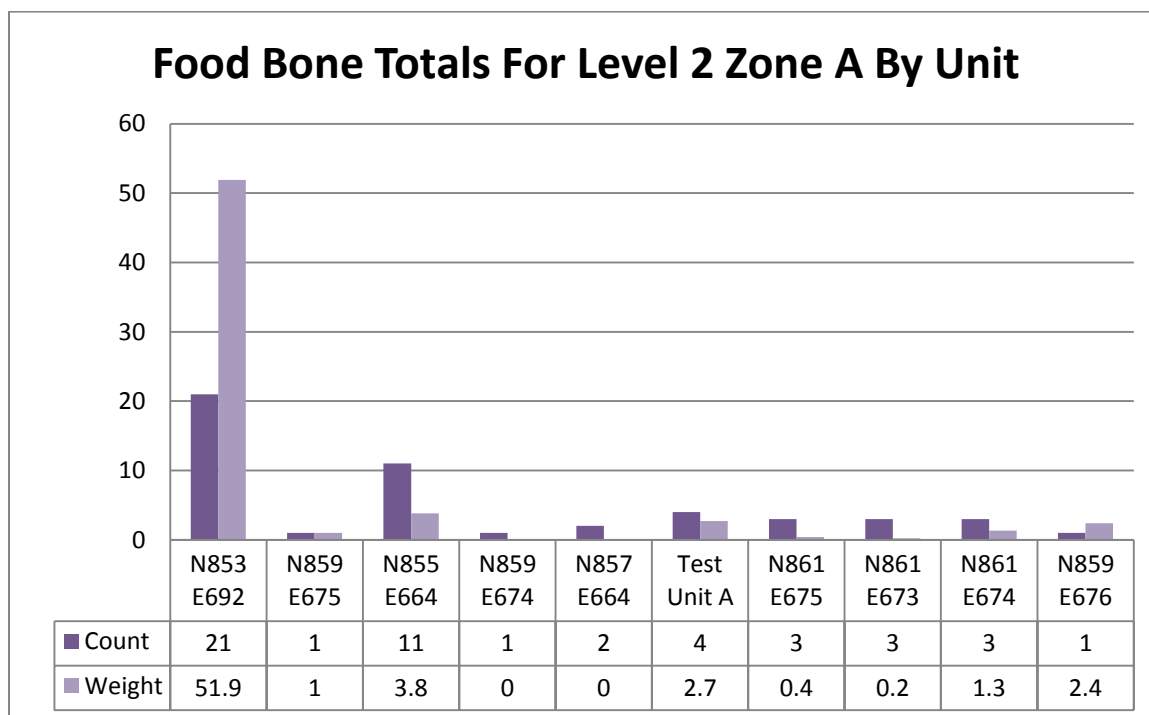


Table 23: Food bone totals for Level 2 Zone A.



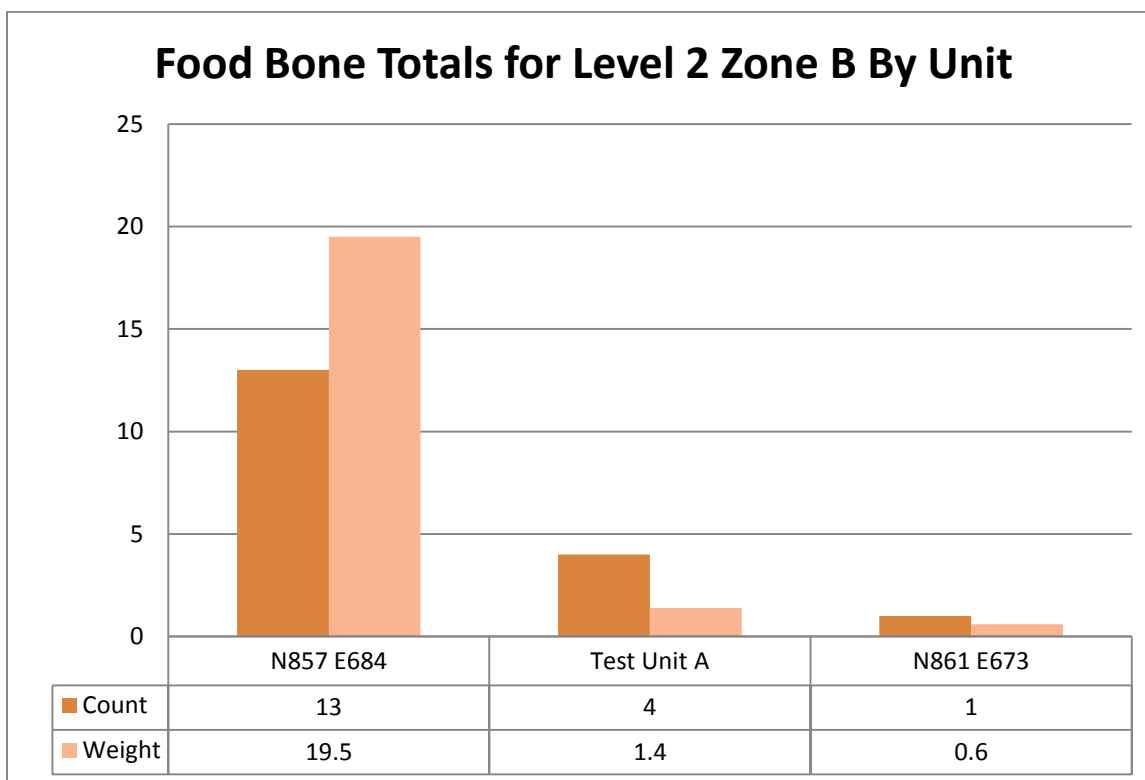


Table 24: Food bone totals for Level 2 Zone B.

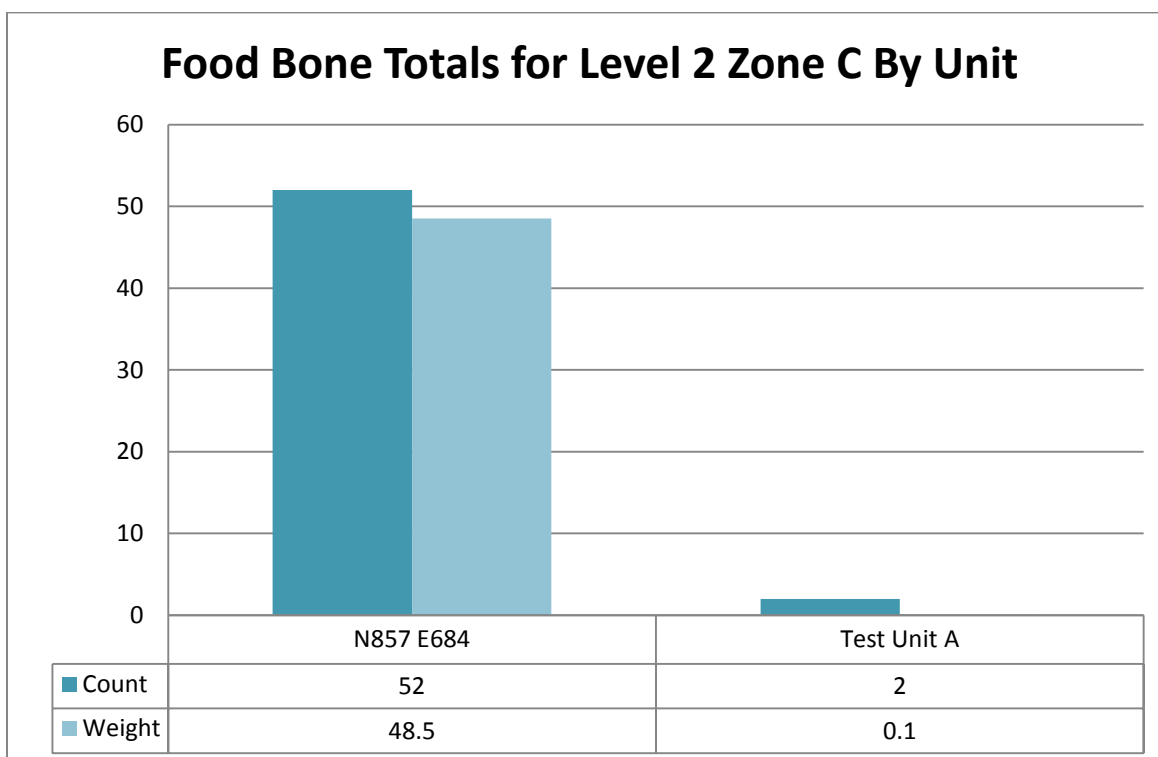


Table 25: Food bone totals for Level 2 Zone C.

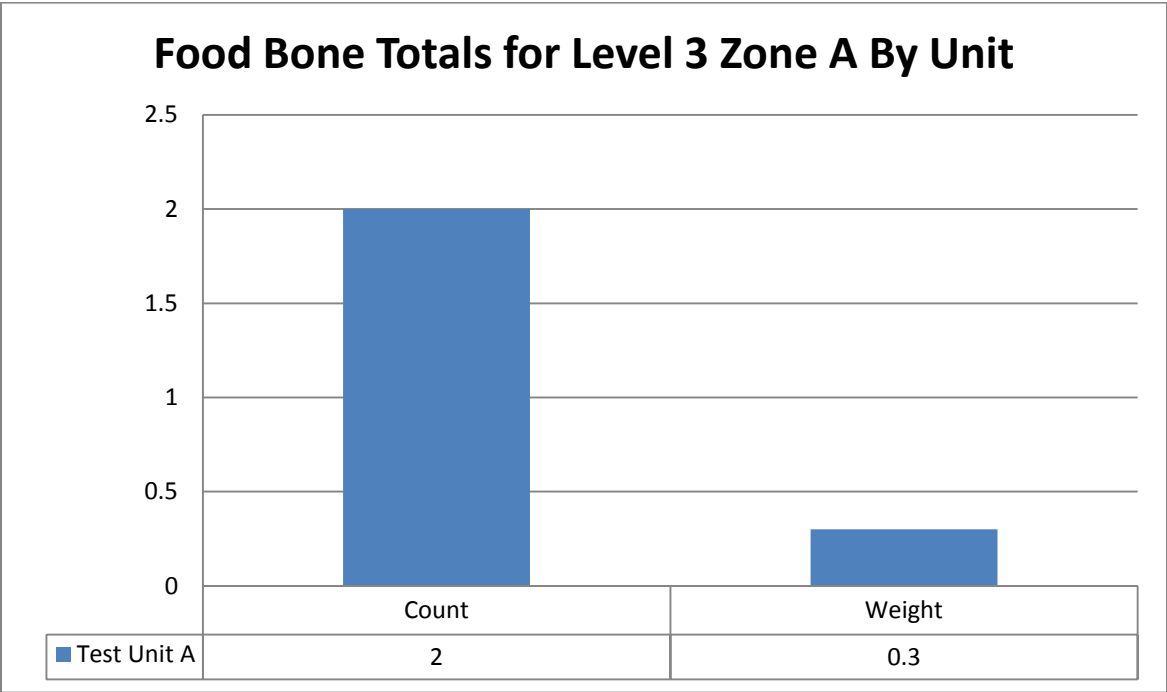


Table 26: Food bone totals for Level 3 Zone A.

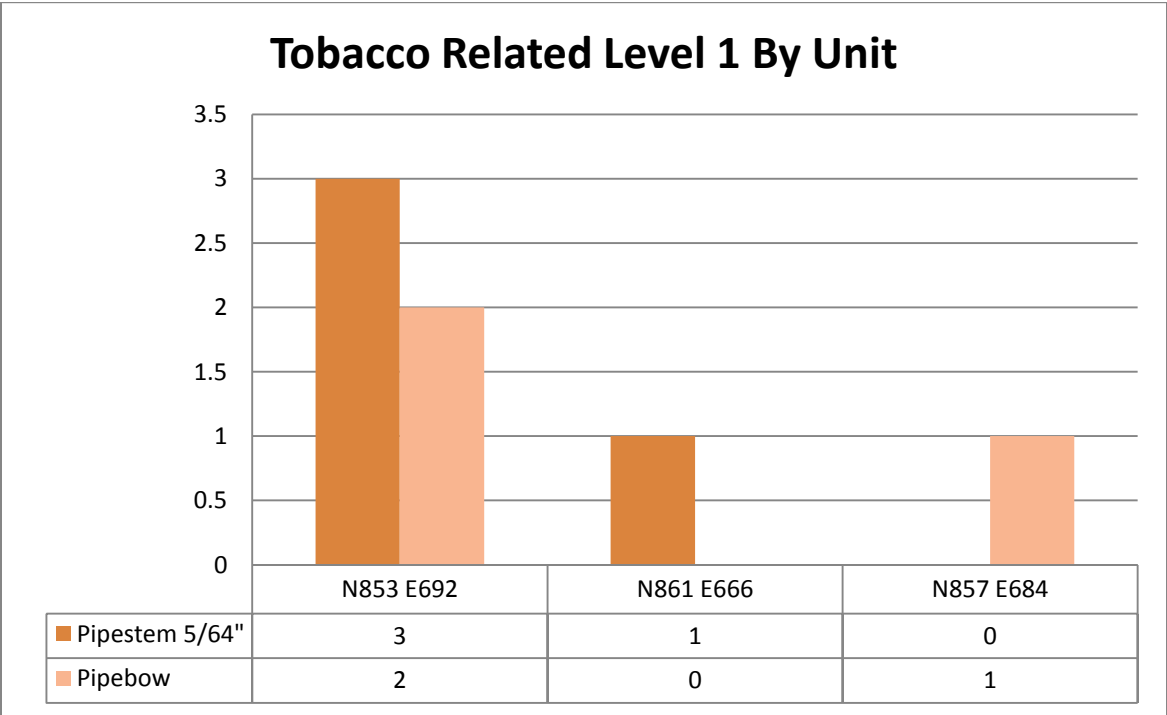


Table 27: Tobacco related artifacts for Level 1.

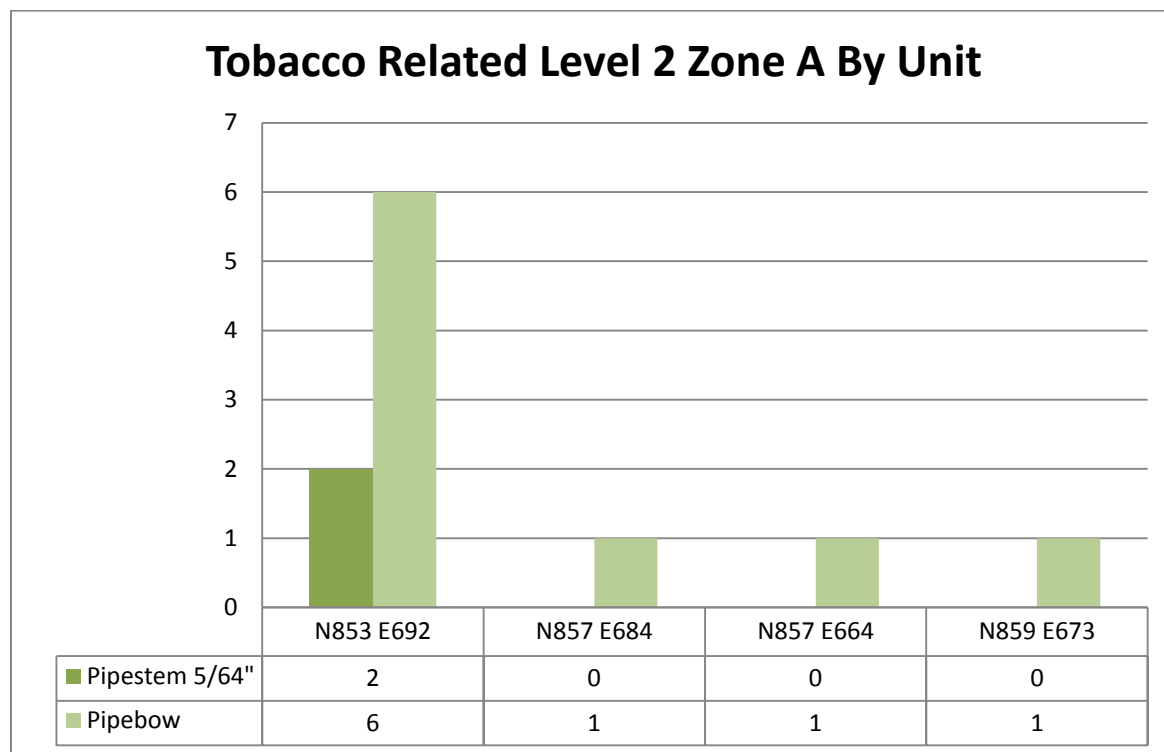


Table 28: Tobacco related artifacts for Level 2 Zone A.

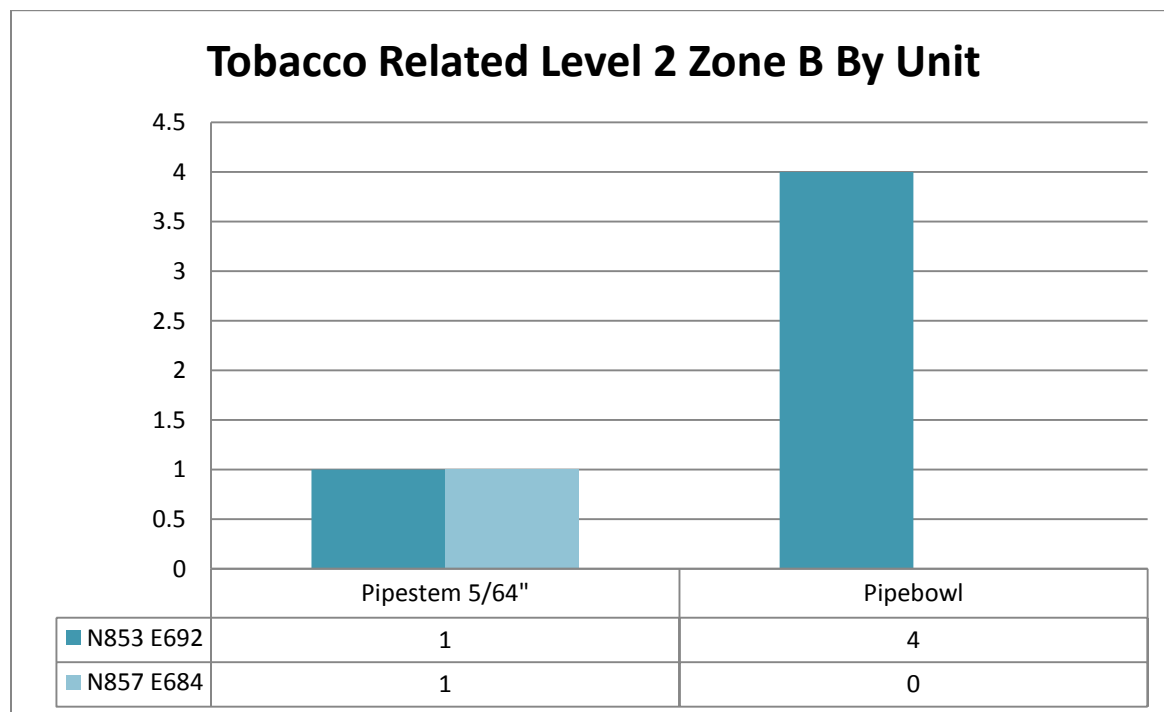


Table 29: Tobacco related artifacts for Level 2 Zone B.

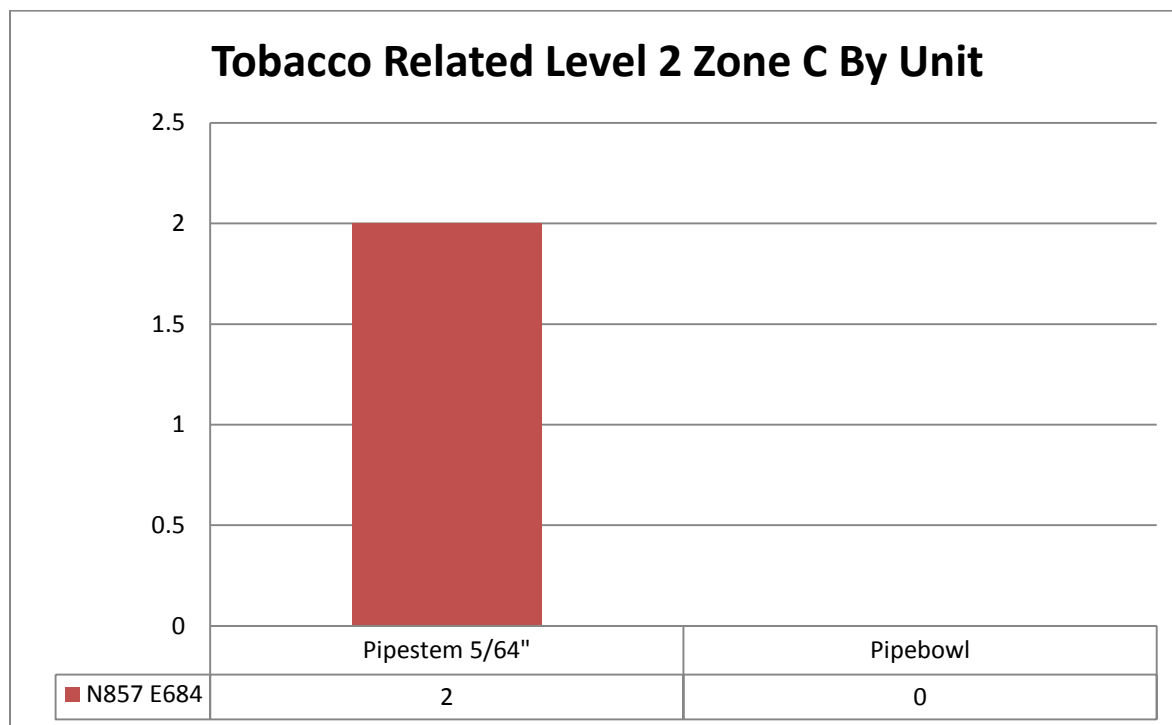


Table 30: Tobacco related artifacts for Level 2 Zone C.

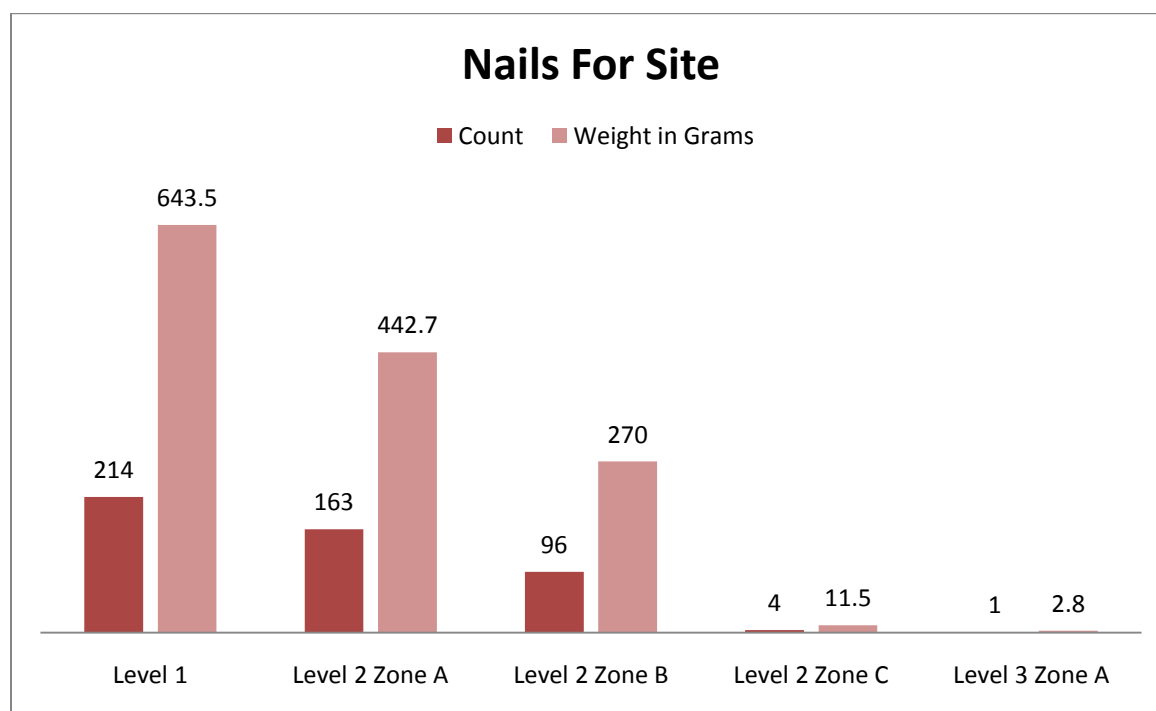


Table 31: Nail totals for site by count and weight.

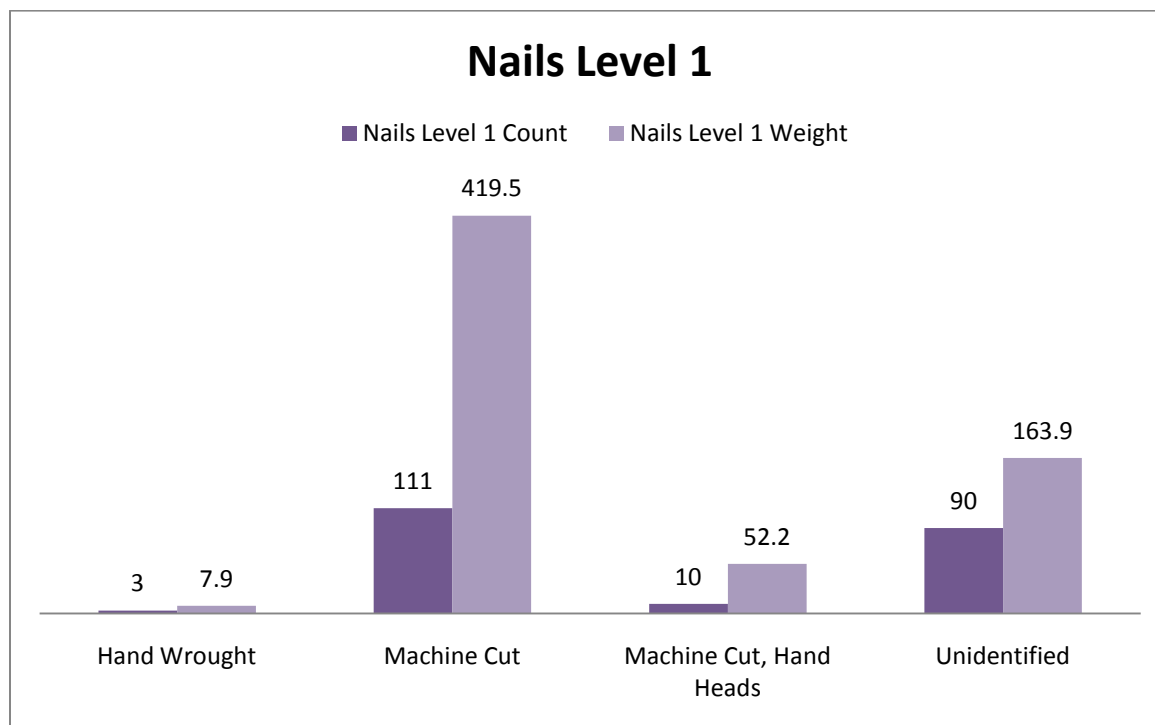


Table 32: Nail counts and weights for Level 1

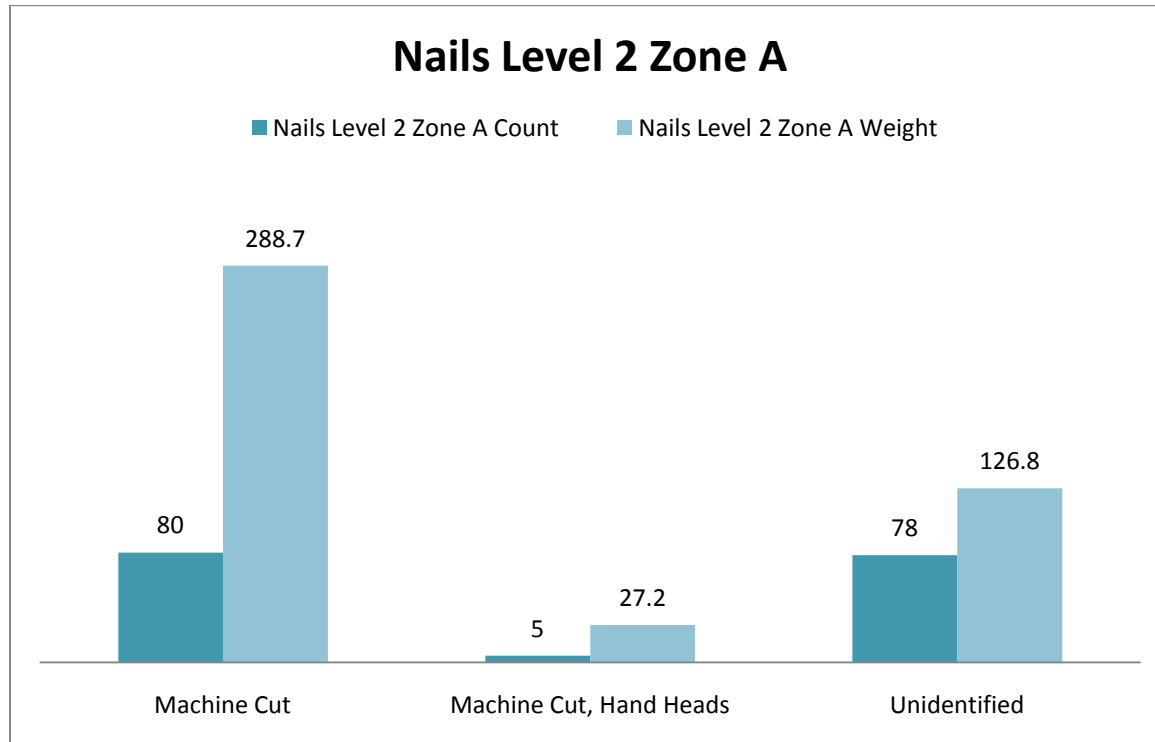


Table 33: Nail counts and weights for Level 2 Zone A.

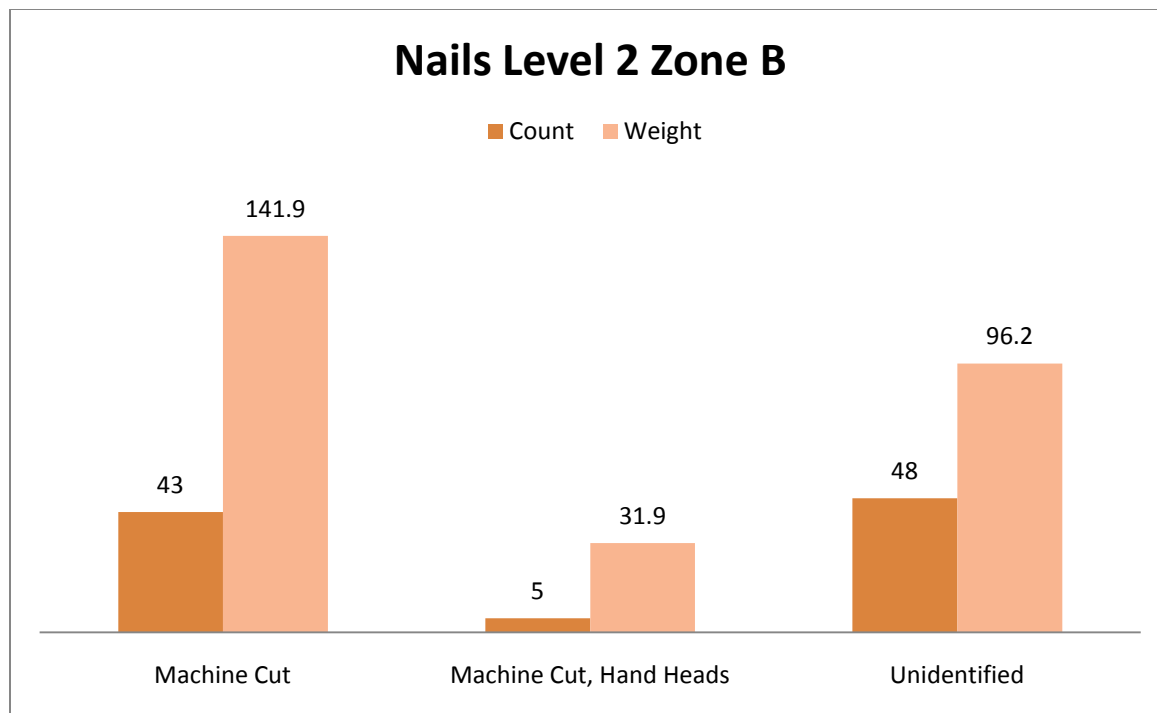


Table 34: Nail counts and weights for Level 2 Zone B.

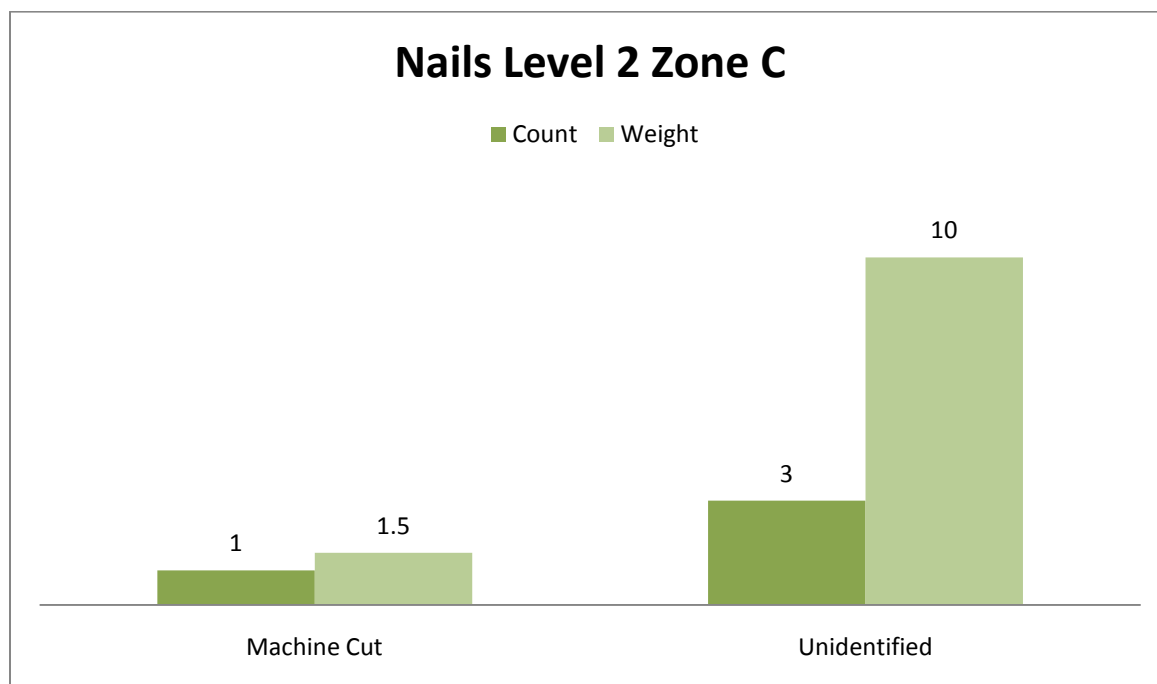


Table 35: Nail counts and weights for Level 2 Zone C.

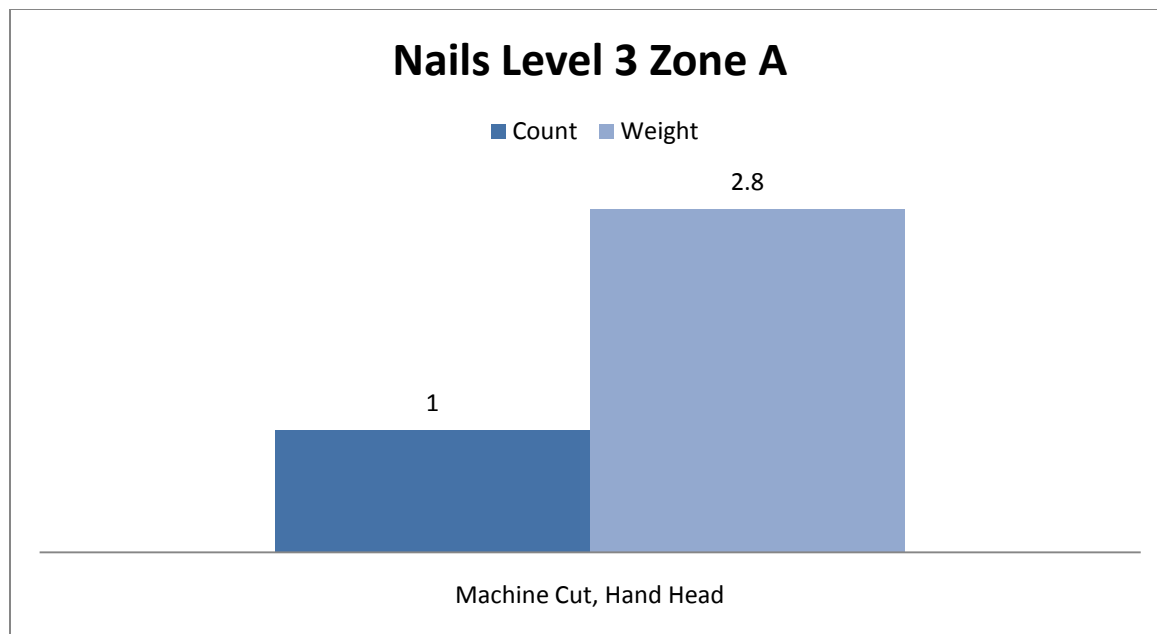


Table 36: Nail count and weight for Level 3 Zone A.

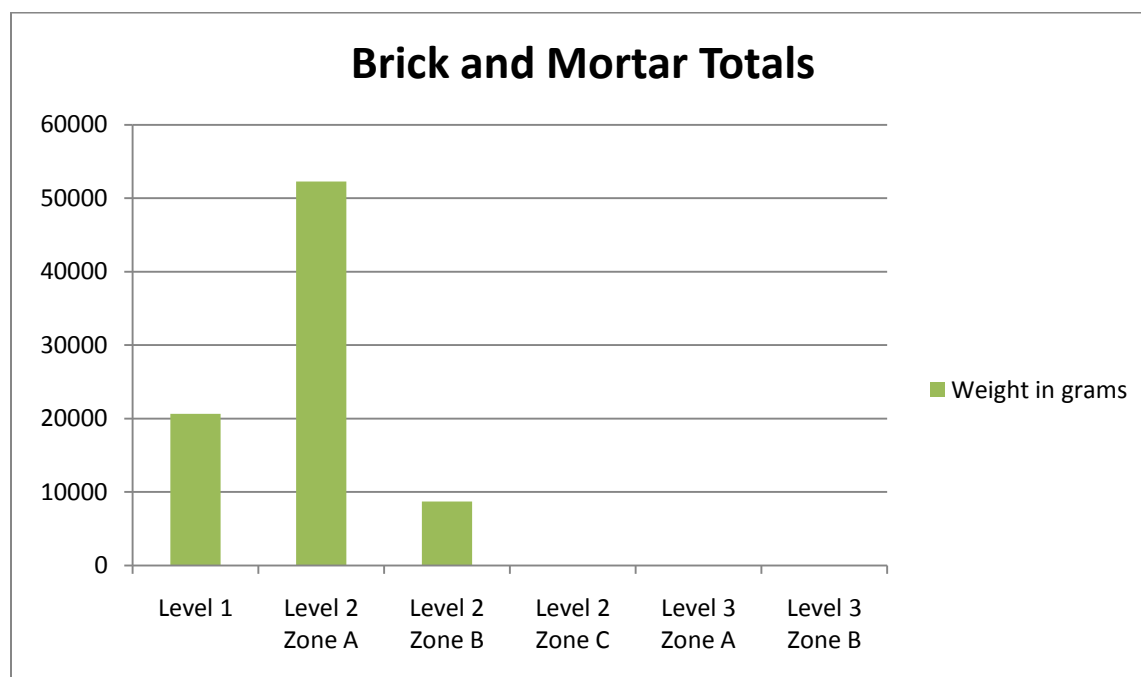


Table 37: Brick and mortar totals by level and zone.

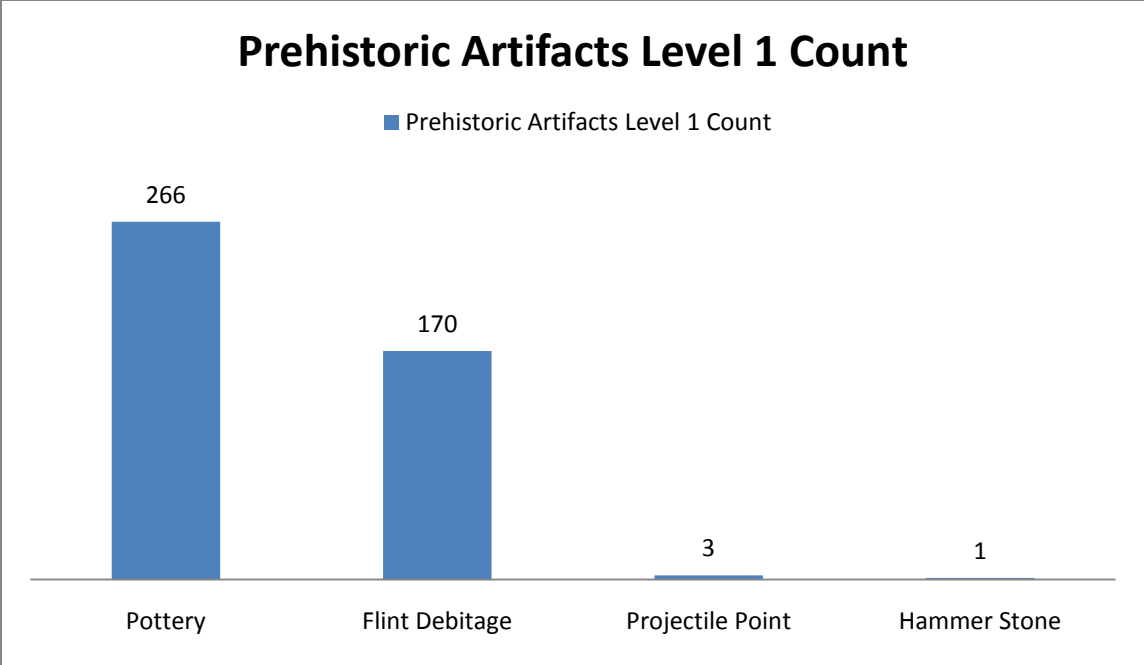


Table 38: Prehistoric artifact count by type for Level 1

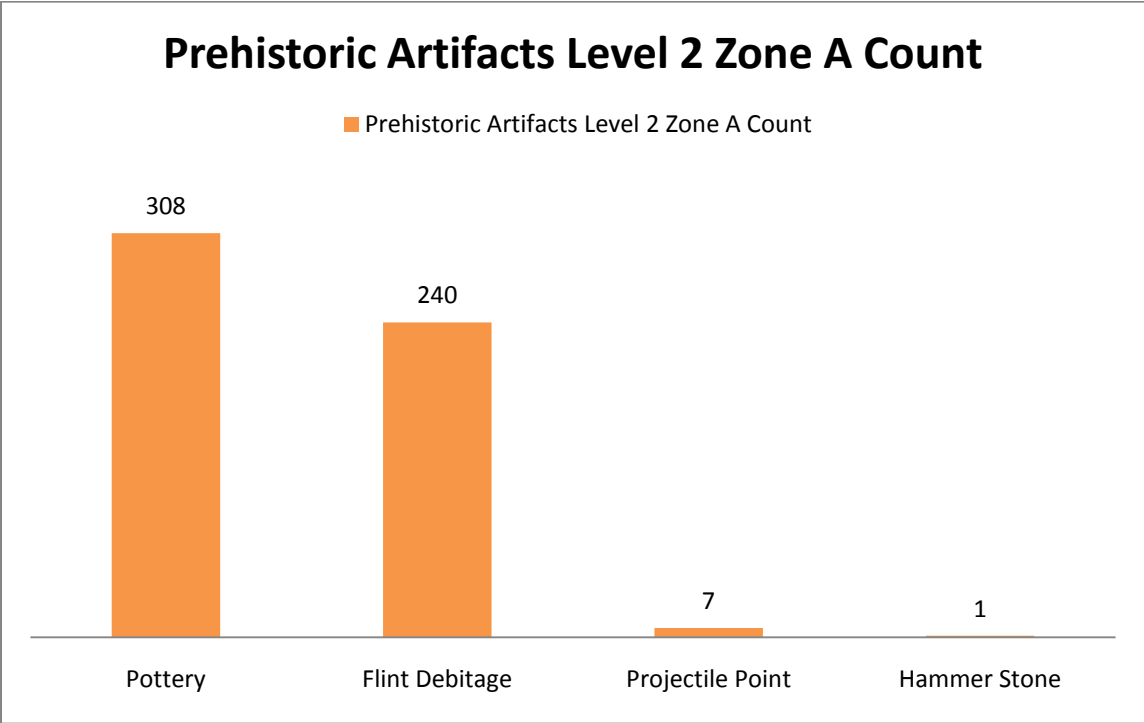


Table 39: Prehistoric artifact count by type for Level 2 Zone A.



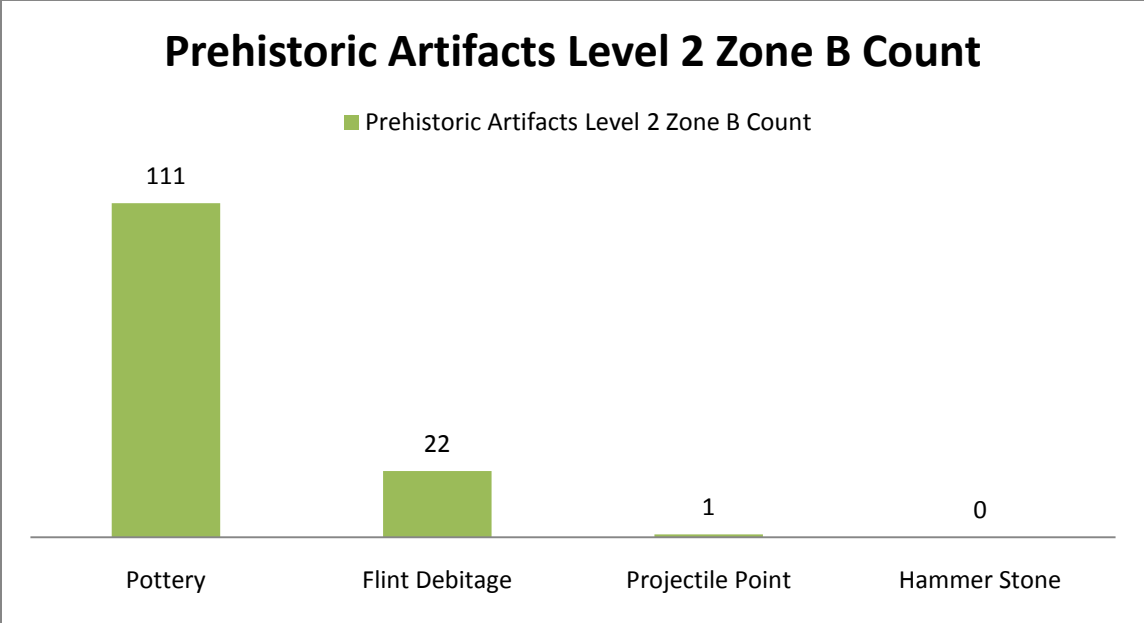


Table 40: Prehistoric artifact count by type for Level 2 Zone B.

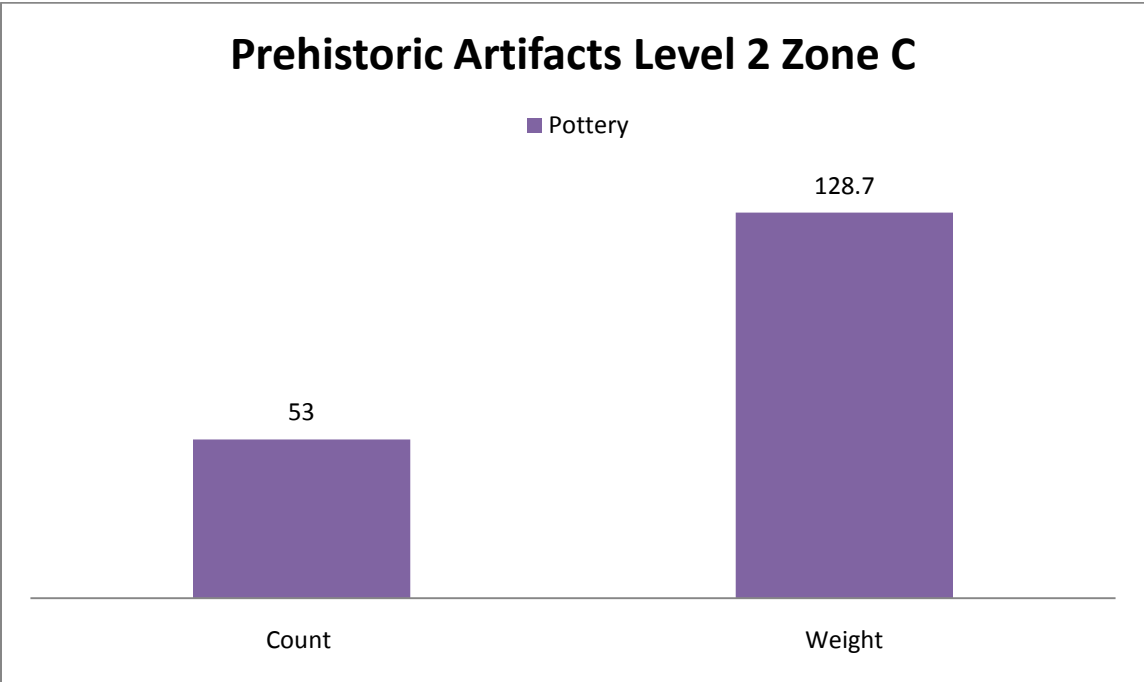


Table 41: Prehistoric artifact count by type for Level 2 Zone C.

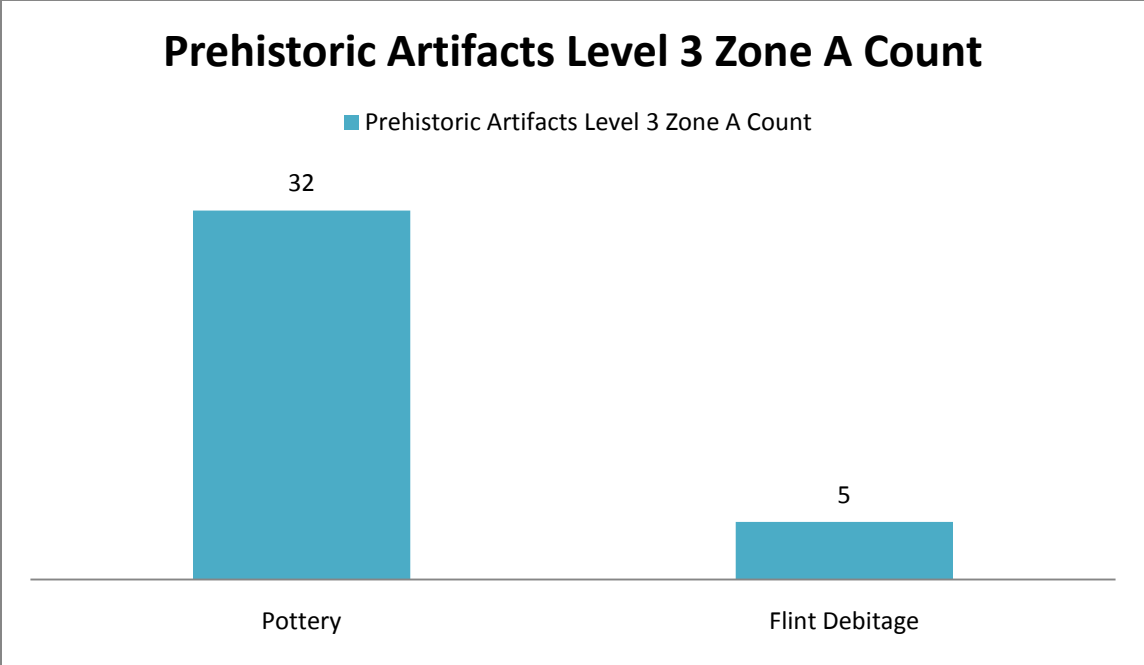


Table 42: Prehistoric Artifact count by type for Level 3 Zone A.

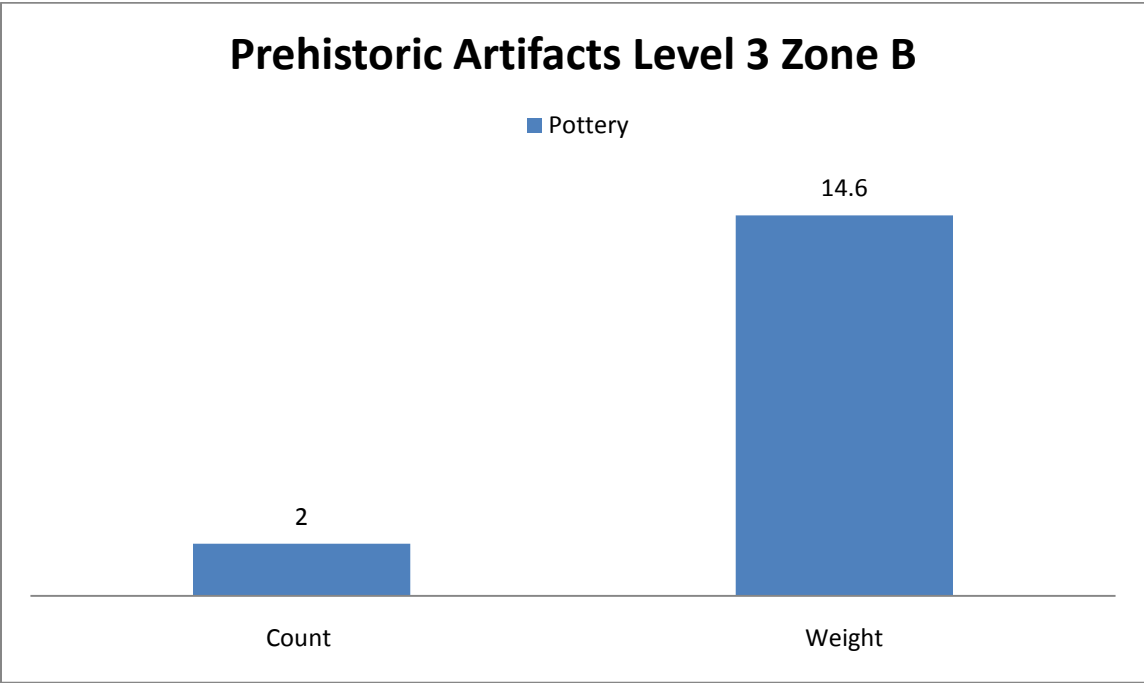


Table 43: Prehistoric artifacts count and weight for Level 3 Zone B.

Name	Ceramic Type	Weight in Grams	Sherd Count	Type Median	Product	Mean Ceramic Date
British Brown	54	4	2	1733	3466	
Rhenish Gray	44	0.7	1	1738	1738	
Stoneware Feather-edged	22	26	1	1791	1791	
Creamware Plain	22	8.3	3	1791	5373	
Creamware Decorated	49	3.4	2	1750	3500	
Delftware Plain	65	6.8	5	1720	8600	
Delftware Jackfield	29	4.2	4	1760	7040	
Lead Glazed Slipware	56	15.2	4	1733	6932	
Annular Pearlware	13	8.1	8	1805	14440	
Blue/Green Shell-edged	19	20.7	7	1805	12635	
Pearlware Embossed	9	7.8	1	1810	1810	
Pearlware Finger Painted	8	0.5	1	1805	1805	
Pearlware Handpainted	4	10.5	6	1830	10980	
Pearlware Plain	20	105.5	61	1805	110105	
Pearlware Polychrome	12	0.9	2	1805	3610	
Pearlware Blue	11	16.4	11	1818	19998	
Transfer Printed						
Pearlware Willow	10	5.5	2	1818	3636	
Transfer Printed						
Pearlware Magenta	11	2	1	1818	1818	
Transfer						

Printed					
Pearlware					
Gold	11	0.3	1	1818	1818
Overlay					
Pearlware					
Plain	5	0.1	2	1815	3630
Porcelain					
Polychrome	5	0.5	1	1815	1815
Porcelain					
Totals			126		226540
					1797.93650

Table 44: Mean Ceramic Date for Cemetery Area.